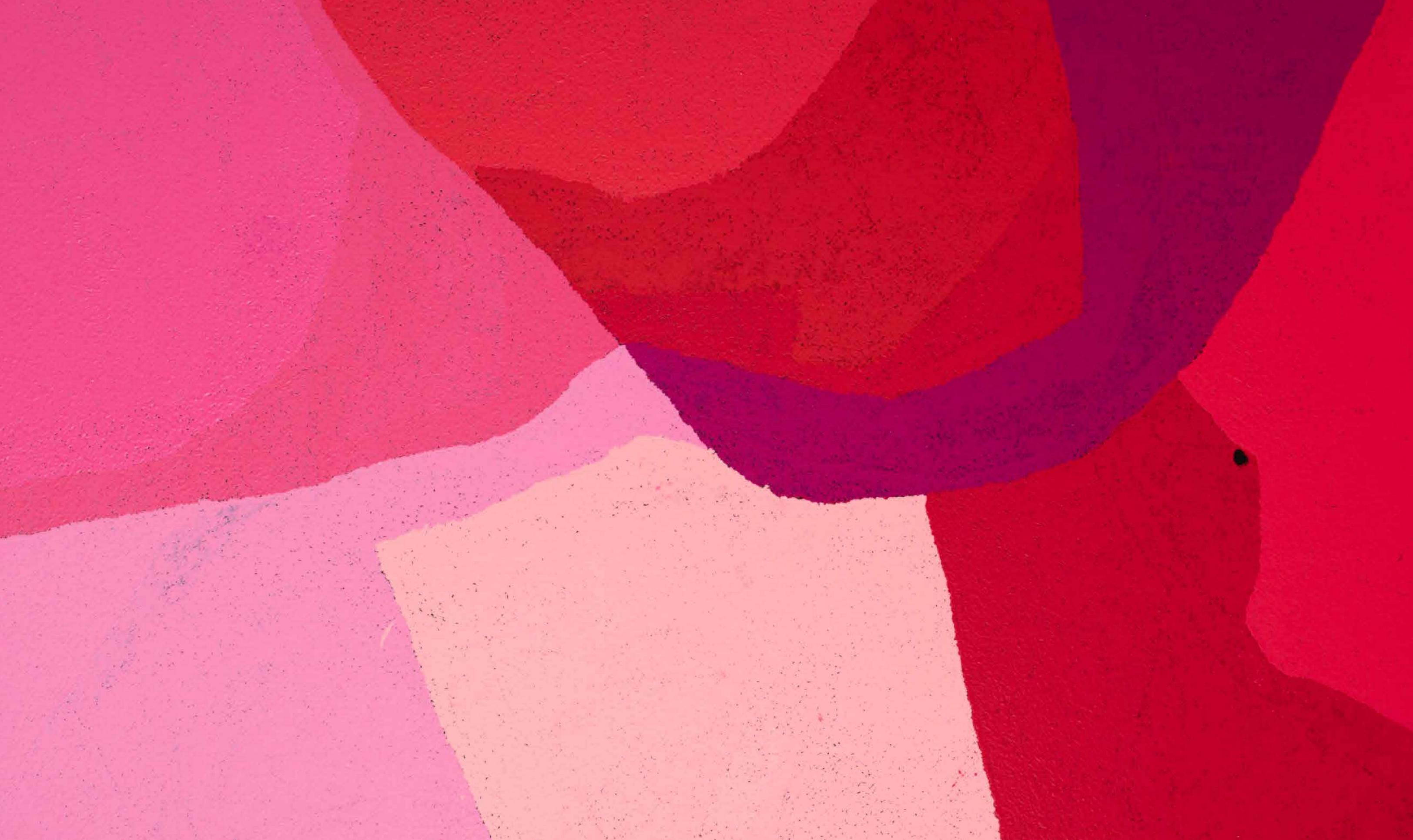


An abstract painting featuring vertical bands of color and texture. From left to right, the bands are: a light purple and pinkish-grey band; a light blue and white band; a dark purple band with thin orange and white lines; a light blue and white band; a light yellow and orange band; and a black semi-circle on a yellow and orange background. The bottom right corner shows a patterned fabric with horizontal lines in black, white, and yellow.

tar nant hi

AG
SA



In the Kurna language of the Adelaide Plains, *tarnanthi* means

‘to rise, come forth, spring up or appear’.

It heralds the animation of new ideas and new beginnings

such as the rising sun, a universal metaphor

across cultures for the agency of imagination.



Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art 2025

tarnanthi

Nici Cumpston
Art Gallery of South Australia • Adelaide

Kaurna welcome

First Nations peoples have many millenniums of continuous connections to this land. It is when we know this country that we can know the people, the culture, the relationships and the stories in this place.

Welcome to Kaurna Country

Naa Marni Niipurna.
Ngai Nari Mickey Kumatpi O'Brien.
Martu-ityangka Kaurna Miyurna
Ngadlu wangkanthi marni naa pudni, Kaurna yarta-ana.

Welcome Friends.

My Aboriginal name is the Impatient One.
On behalf of the Kaurna People
We say it is good you can come to Kaurna Country.

Story of Wisdom

When the new people came, our Elders decided to hide the knowledge from them. They thought of the tallest mountains, deepest oceans and darkest caves, but they realised the people would find it in those places, as they like to climb, they like to swim and they like to explore. So they hid it in the last place they would look, in their hearts.

Kaurna Wisdom recognises we are born of a physical, emotional and spiritual presence. We say your face tells you where you have been, and your heart tells you where to go.

We collect knowledge in our Mukamuka (brain),
it is our Pultha (heart) which gives us the wisdom to use it.

Each one of us can find, know and share knowledge, but knowledge on its own is dangerous, and we can use it for a self-purpose. Wisdom comes when knowledge is used for the wellbeing of others. It is the hardest journey we can take in life, to look into our hearts.

Our Artists

Tarnanthi brings a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from many places, who use a variety of art mediums. Each will share and bring physical, spiritual and emotional connections to this oldest continuous culture.

This year AGSA and the Tarnanthi Festival have reached a wonderful milestone, with Tarnanthi's tenth-year celebration, bringing an array of cultures and art together.

This year's exhibition title is *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi*.

The artists will invite us all to take the time to observe, listen, and feel the presence of their creations, evolved from the Ancestors' teachings, from their journeys and experiences, till now and to the next generations.

Let us be reminded, cultures don't divide us, but they can bring us together.

It isn't the difference of cultures we should focus on, but the similarities we make with them.

Ngaityu yungantalya, ngaityu yakanantalya, padni-adlu wadlu
My Brothers, My Sisters, let us walk together in harmony

Nakutha, Ngaityalya

We thank you and look forward to seeing you at the Tarnanthi 2025 Festival.

Mickey Kumatpi O'Brien

Kaurna Elder

pp. 2-3, detail: Josie Petyarr Kunoth, Anmatyerre people, Northern Territory, born Utopia Homestead, Northern Territory 1959
Sugar bag, 2015, Apungalindum, Northern Territory
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 173.0 x 353.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
© Josie Petyarr Kunoth/Copyright Agency, 2025

p. 5: Trudy Inkamala, Western Arrernte/Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Hamilton Downs Station, Northern Territory 1940, died Northern Territory 2023
Roxanne Petrick, Arrernte/Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1986
Dulcie Raggett, Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1970
Marlene Rubuntja, Western Arrernte/Arrernte people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1961
Rosabella Ryder, Arrernte people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1975
Dulcie Sharpe, Luritja/Arrernte people, Northern Territory, born Hamilton Downs, Northern Territory 1957
Rhonda Sharpe, Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1977
Roxanne Sharpe, Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1985
Valerie Stafford, Anmatyerre people, Northern Territory, born Coniston Station, Northern Territory 1963
Every face has a story, every story has a face: Kulila!, 2016, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory
mixed media, dyed blankets, polyester wadding, embroidery thread, twigs,
228.0 x 120.0 x 100.0 cm (overall)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Yarrenyty Arterre Artists
photo: Saul Steed



Message from the Premier of South Australia



Like the first light of day after which it is named, Tarnanthi has brought illumination and revealed beauty since emerging in 2015.

In the years since, millions of people have experienced this homegrown celebration of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, here on Kurna Country.

Who could have foreseen that, ten years later, this bright homegrown celebration of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art would grow into a dazzling cultural experience of national importance?

Today the influence and inspiration of this landmark South Australian event is far-reaching indeed.

It encourages First Nations artists across the country to conceive and create bold new works that express their rich culture and profound stories, months and even years in advance.

Tarnanthi's growing succession of original touring exhibitions ensures that First Nations creativity and culture inform and inspire audiences statewide, nationally and even internationally.

In addition, its groundbreaking education program is active year-round in classrooms in every state and territory, deepening cultural understanding among future generations.

The tangible effects of this festival are just as significant. It has generated opportunities and unique benefits for some 10,000 First Nations artists and their communities all over Australia – not least through its ethical Art Fair, which has sold more than \$8.5 million of art, with every dollar going directly to artists and into their communities.

The South Australian Government is proud to have collaborated with the Art Gallery of South Australia and principal partner BHP since 2015 to deliver Tarnanthi, a vital part of our ongoing commitment to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic, cultural and creative leadership.

I encourage everyone to be a part of this peerless celebration of our nation's living culture, and to share in the extraordinary creativity and strength upon which Tarnanthi shines its light.

Hon. Peter Malinauskas, MP

Premier of South Australia

detail: Betty Chimney, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Port Augusta, South Australia 1957
Raylene Walatinna, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1973
Nganampa Ngura – ngunytju munu untalpa (Our Country – mother and daughter)
2021, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 198.0 × 198.0 cm
Gift of Mary Choate through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artists, courtesy of Iwantja Arts
photo: Art Gallery of New South Wales



Message from the Principal Partner, BHP



Tarnanthi's tenth anniversary marks a decade of cultural excellence, community empowerment and meaningful impact.

Since its inception in 2015, Tarnanthi has grown into a nationally recognised platform for contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture. Over the past ten years, it has championed artists, fostered economic opportunity, and deepened understanding and respect across South Australia and all of Australia.

As Principal Partner, BHP has proudly supported Tarnanthi from the beginning. Our partnership has helped bring to life highly anticipated festivals, exceptional exhibitions and the ever-popular Tarnanthi Art Fair. We've stood alongside Tarnanthi as it has evolved, expanding opportunities for artists and amplifying their voices.

In recent years, Tarnanthi's touring exhibitions have reached regional, national and international audiences, reflecting a shared commitment to celebrating the diversity and depth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and stories.

The award-winning Regional Tarnanthi program has further elevated the practices and profiles of South Australian artists working independently in regional areas. Through creative development, mentoring and exhibition opportunities, many artists have gained national recognition.

Complementing this, Tarnanthi's creative skills initiative has supported the production of market-ready works, strengthening both cultural visibility and economic development.

As a global organisation operating in remote regions, initiatives like these deeply resonate with us. We are committed to building and sustaining respectful relationships with the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate.

We congratulate Tarnanthi on ten years of extraordinary achievement and look forward to supporting its continued success.

Anna Wiley
Asset President, Copper SA, BHP

detail: Angkuna Baker, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Areyonga, Northern Territory c.1934
Areyonga, 2021, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 71.5 x 46.5 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist, courtesy of Iwantja Arts
photo: Saul Steed



Director's foreword

The tenth anniversary of Tarnanthi cements its reputation as the pre-eminent First Nations art festival in this country. This anniversary is not only an exceptional milestone in the journey of Tarnanthi but also a poignant moment in time in which to pause and contemplate the generative, transformative power of Tarnanthi on the lives of artists, arts workers, communities, and people from around Australia and the world.

As this deeply moving, celebratory compendium publication reveals, Tarnanthi has achieved much that we can now survey, celebrate and utilise to shape its future. Over ten years Tarnanthi has presented 150 exhibitions at the Art Gallery of South Australia, partner venues across South Australia, and via touring exhibitions throughout our state and nationally and internationally. Around 9500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander artists from across Australia have created works for Tarnanthi. More than 2.2 million people have experienced its exhibitions and events.

Figures, of course, tell only part of the story. Like numbers on a milestone, they help to measure the journey but not to remember it. Visitors to AGSA now have an opportunity to re-experience much of Tarnanthi's first decade in *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi*. This exhibition assembles more than 200 works that have featured in Tarnanthi's exhibitions at AGSA since 2015 and are now held in our permanent collection. Many are groundbreaking. All are memorable.

Tarnanthi has thrived because it places First Nations artists at the heart of all its ambitions. *Too Deadly* represents the excellence of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art developed and encountered through Tarnanthi, and principles of respect and listening are the solid foundations of all Tarnanthi relationships and projects. By listening to artists' aims and intentions, and by encouraging and supporting new works, Tarnanthi has nurtured artists' aspirations, helped them to realise bold ambitions, and provided a national showcase for their creative outcomes. Importantly, artists are in control of their projects and empowered through their leadership. For many artists, the combination of opportunity and material, moral and organisational support has helped to elevate their practices, profiles and careers.

While many creative achievements are displayed throughout *Too Deadly*, many other of Tarnanthi's outcomes are experienced beyond Adelaide in First Nations communities across our continent. The majority of Tarnanthi's exhibiting artists (more than eighty per cent in 2023) live on Country and work through community-based art centres. It is in these dynamic, essential centres that art is a critical source of revenue. Income from art sales to private and public

collections – including the \$8.5 million from Tarnanthi's Art Fair since 2015 – enable artists, families and communities to remain on Country and connected to culture. Art projects keep culture strong and form a vital part of sharing cultural knowledge with younger generations.

Tarnanthi shares the enduring cultural necessity and creative brilliance of First Nations art and design with broadly based communities in countless ways. These include its award-winning education program, which engenders cultural understanding in classrooms nationwide. Tarnanthi's transport subsidies bring exhibitions within the reach of rural and remote students. And an unparalleled program of year-round touring exhibitions takes inspiring First Nations art and stories to new audiences around the nation – as *Too Deadly* will do when it tours Australia from 2026.

Over the past decade Tarnanthi has forged its own groundbreaking and wide-ranging courses. Its routes and itineraries have been defined by landmark exhibitions seen by millions, and through respect, support and opportunity it has sought to connect at the grassroots with artists and their communities. Tarnanthi has travelled a path of respectful and ethical best practice, one that others now seek to follow.

Tarnanthi has not been alone on its path. Throughout its ten-year journey, it has been aided by the South Australian Government. The support of Tarnanthi's principal partner BHP has enabled everything it has done. I thank them deeply. I also warmly thank Artistic Director Nici Cumpston OAM, whose vision and expertise has set and steered Tarnanthi's course. I respect and applaud Nici's cultural leadership and congratulate her and her many colleagues on all that Tarnanthi has accomplished over its first remarkable decade.

At this tenth anniversary milestone we celebrate Tarnanthi and its myriad outcomes, its impacts and its ethos before Tarnanthi's journey resumes anew.

Jason Smith

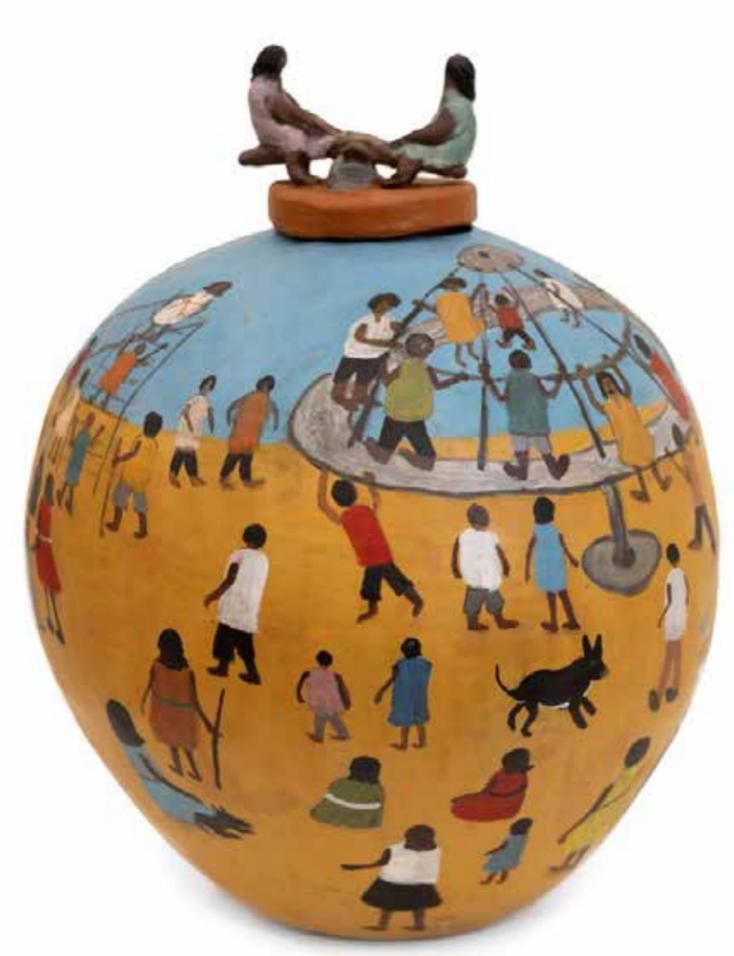
Director, Art Gallery of South Australia

detail: Thea Anamara Perkins, Arrernte people, Northern Territory, Kalkadoon people, Queensland, born Sydney 1992
Nyinta, 2019, Sydney
synthetic polymer paint on clay board, 30.5 × 40.5 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist, courtesy of the artist and N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
photo: Saul Steed



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Judith Pungarta Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory 1947
Swings, 2023, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory
 underglaze on terracotta, 29.0 x 19.0 cm
 Edward Minton Newman Bequest Fund 2024
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Judith Pungarta Inkamala, courtesy of Hermannsburg Potters



Too Deadly
Ten Years of Tarnanthi

Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi

Nici Cumpston OAM and Professor Lisa Slade

Tarnanthi is too deadly.

These words have rung forth many times over the past decade. But what do they mean? The word 'deadly' is one used widely by First Nations people to describe something or someone as excellent. First coined in the 1970s, it is a mark of respect and an acknowledgement of Blak excellence. 'Too deadly' expresses the superlative power of Tarnanthi, a festival that now, a decade on, has engaged thousands of artists and hundreds of thousands of audience members and brought new work to light.

Tarnanthi's origin story is, like most, complex and circuitous. In the early 2010s, the South Australian Labor Government was emphatic that Adelaide needed a First Nations festival. The city of churches has been defining itself through the idiom of the festival for more than half a century and by 2014 the state government saw an opportunity for a focus on First Nations art and culture. This festival-focused proposition, to be made a reality by the Art Gallery of South Australia, at first seemed at odds with the exhibition model that, as art curators, we (Nici Cumpston and Lisa Slade) were familiar with. More accustomed to a predominantly visual experience, the festival model led to a strengthening of a new curatorial mode that was already nascent at AGSA and, more importantly, extant in First Nations culture for millennia. We realised that 'the festival' with its cross-arts embrace of the creative – a place where art, music, song and dance coalesce – was perfectly suited to a celebration of First Nations culture. As Tiwi Islanders have long known, 'to sing is to dance is to paint', as curator Judith Ryan has paraphrased.¹ This expanded field – a space that pushed the visual into the other sensory domains – led us to consider not just what Tarnanthi might look like, but what it might sound and feel like too.

Tarnanthi's new 'relational' curatorial mode of working ensured that artists, working at all stages in their practices and across the country, retained agency and were supported to have an ambitious 'what if' moment. Swiss curator Harald Szeemann describes this as a model where the curator is an accomplice of the artist.² One etymological search suggests that the word 'accomplice' derives from the verb 'to plait' and, when considered threefold and intertwined like a plait, Tarnanthi is a pact between artist, curator and community. This expanded field and threefold relational model would sustain Tarnanthi for the next decade.

This essay tracks the past ten years as the forging of this new curatorial model, one that foregrounds innovation while being indebted to 65,000 years of continuing cultural practice. In doing so, it highlights signature aspects of the Tarnanthi model, such as the Artistic Director's critical task of deep listening and encouraging artists; the centrality of artist-led projects; the importance of supporting cultural continuity projects; and the imperative of facilitating innovation rooted in tradition.

Indeed, Tarnanthi's own story of innovation emerges from the traditional lands on which it has grown and flourished – on Kurna Yarta, a place of cross-cultural 'coming together' for millennia. The Kurna people are the traditional owners of what we now know as the Adelaide Plains in South Australia. The city of Adelaide, Kurna Tarntanya, the place of the red kangaroo,

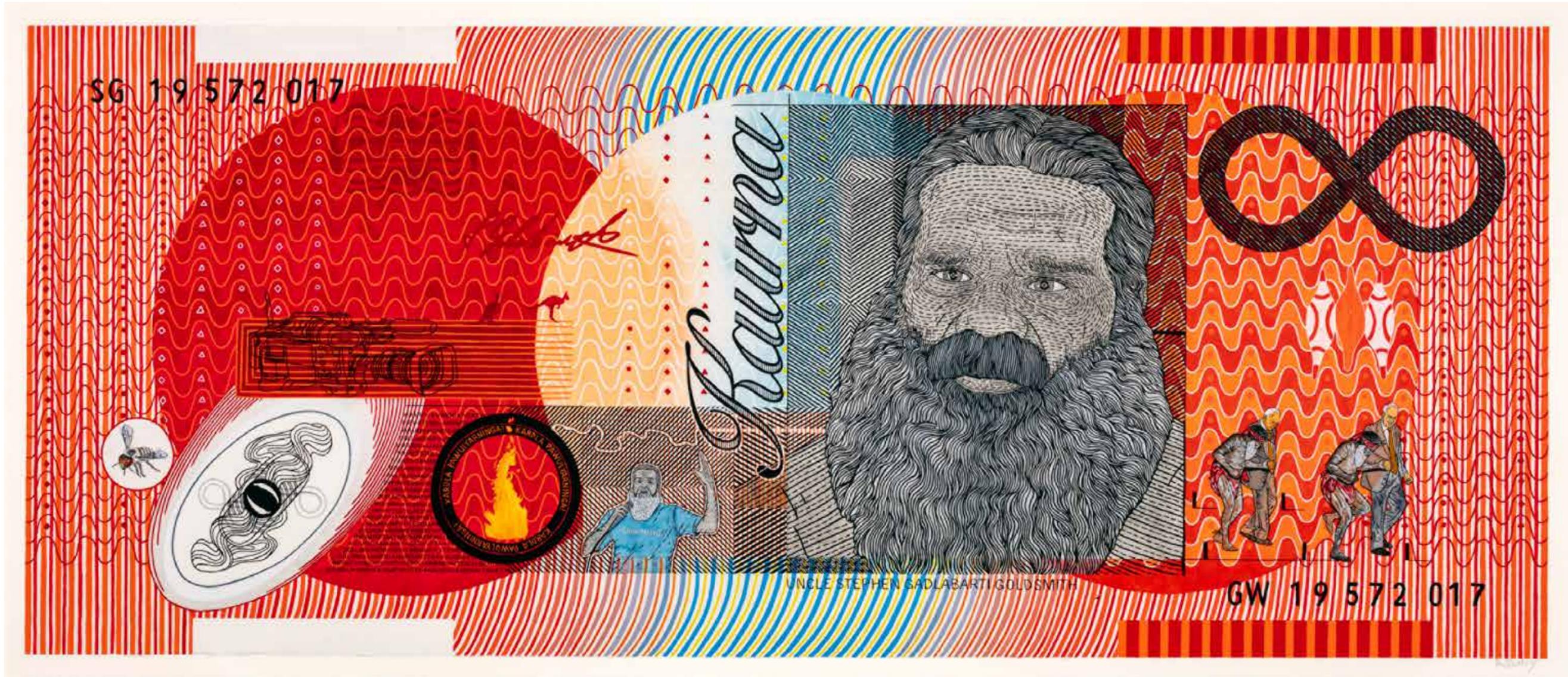
pp. 14–15: Installation view featuring the series *Wanangara – Lightning* by Kunmanara (Tiger) Yaltangki, Tarnanthi 2023, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed



Kuma Kaaru dancers at the launch of Tarnanthi 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: John Montesi

is situated on the banks of Karrawirra Pari, the red gum forest river. Kurna people, and many other nations from across the continent, have gathered here for millennia to exchange knowledge, materials and information vital for survival. This has informed the Kurna concept of the panpapanpalya, the intercultural forum of ideas for which the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains have always been known.

It is not by chance, then, that the city of Adelaide today is defined by its festivals.



New beginnings

The name Tarnanthi was gifted to AGSA's First Nations festival by the late Stephen Gadlabarti Goldsmith after sustained consultation with Elders at Kurna Warra Pintyanthi (KWP), a group of Kurna teachers, linguists and language enthusiasts who are engaged in the reclamation and teaching of the Kurna language in the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide. In the Kurna language, tarnanthi means to rise, come forth, spring up or appear. It heralds the animation of new ideas and new beginnings, such as the rising sun, a universal metaphor across cultures for the agency of imagination. The gift from Uncle Stevie was more than the gift of a name. It was the gift of a curatorial model, one that would flex with the changing times and catch the emerging voices and practices to come. With Tarnanthi, Uncle Stevie had endowed us with a way of rethinking the festival engine as a new, relational model. Fittingly, the first Tarnanthi Festival in 2015 featured Uncle Stevie with his dance troupe Taikurtinna, dancing each of the guest speakers across the ceremonial ground onto the podium, including the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Jay Weatherill, Asset President BHP Jacqui McGill, and the Hon. Paul Keating, former Prime Minister.

Ryan Presley, Marri Ngarr people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1987
Blood Money - Infinite Dollar Note - Uncle Stephen Gadlabarti Goldsmith Commemorative, 2019, Brisbane watercolour on paper, 126.5 x 187.5 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Ryan Presley, courtesy of Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane
 photo: Saul Steed

In the words of Keating, spoken at that first festival:

Aboriginal art has ... been a method of translating an entire culture and of understanding an entire continent and has been a major influence in obliging Australians to come to terms with the question of who and what we are. Contemporary Aboriginal art moves us further along that road – both describing while revealing the journey.³

The first festival relied on a constellation of talent that involved visual artists, musicians, performers and filmmakers. The first launch featured the renowned female music duo Stiff Gins, heralding future launches that would include celebrated First Nations musicians such as Electric Fields and Kuren, Ripple Effect Band, Baker Boy, Tjarutja Dance Theatre with Antara Singers and Electric Fields, and in 2023 Dan Sultan and his Band. Music is now a Tarnanthi mainstay, after the first festival inaugurated listening as a key modality – aligning with one of Tarnanthi's guiding principles of focusing on the centrality of the artist's voice.



This principle is articulated through the 'aural' components of the festival but also through its visual mainstays. In a work titled *Every face has a story, every story has a face: Kulila!* (p. 5) – a call to 'listen up!' in several Western Desert languages – the Western Arrernte artists from Yarrenyty Arltere in the Larapinta Valley Town Camp in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) beseeched new audiences to tune in to Aboriginal voices.

All these faces, our faces, our stories. Listen! We have stories to tell. We come here and work, we have done this for a while now. See these faces, they all have stitched all over them all these stories, markings. That's what we do, sew and talk and listen and try to make things get better. So, we thought we might make these faces so you can listen, to us, to our stories, listen to us getting better.⁴

Deep listening – a requirement for Tarnanthi audiences – also informed the positioning of a new, and ancient, conference model, the Panpapanpalya, from 2015. In the Kurna language, this is the word for conference. Predicated on deep listening, panpapanpalya is where exchange and education happens. In contrast to assimilating one culture into another, the notion of panpapanpalya acknowledges, in the words of Kurna Elder Uncle Lewis O'Brien, that:

every nation has their own concepts and ways of thinking, and by coming together we can exchange knowledge and gain a deeper understanding about life from each other ... We welcome their energy and the open exchange between people from across the country, a panpapanpalya, once again on Kurna land.⁵

Yolju hip-hop star Baker Boy performing at the launch of Tarnanthi 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: John Montesi



Like the festival launch, this new/ancient conference is staged outdoors, with everyone on an even footing on Kurna Yarta, with curated sessions involving artists across the festival being encouraged and supported to share information about their practice, many for the first time, by a leading First Nations interlocutor. The Panpapanpalya extends what the two of us had achieved previously in more conventional curatorial exhibition models, and built on the opportunities for new relationships to be forged at the Tarnanthi artists' lunch, an informal outdoor gathering for exhibiting artists, their families and art centre support staff, held the day before the conference. This focus on the artists remains clear through the Panpapanpalya, with the audience repositioned as witnesses to the exchanges between artists.

The spirit of the Panpapanpalya proliferates across the Tarnanthi partner programs, in which typically more than two dozen festival exhibitions and events occur across the city and state. This model relies on what instrumental former AGSA Director Nick Mitzevich calls 'radical friend-making' and is one critical aspect of the relational model. Through this friend-making, other organisations also become accomplices of the artists, with the outcome being the growth of cultural capacity for each partner organisation, including those that previously had little engagement with First Nations communities. Tarnanthi therefore emerges as an exemplar of cultural care – intergenerational, across artforms, and enacted across time and place.

Panpapanpalya with Gail Mabo, Sonya Rankine and Renee Johnson, Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Nat Rogers

When listening becomes hearing

The role of Tarnanthi's Artistic Director is a reminder of the original linguistic links between the notions of curating and caring. In this role for the past decade, Nici Cumpston has acted as the 'light catcher', in keeping with the metaphor of new or first light, by seeing what art projects are emerging and coaxing them into the light, and into being, with care. The Adelaide-based music duo Electric Fields wrote the unofficial anthem for Tarnanthi with their hit 'Shade away'. The recurring line of the song is 'have you seen the light?', with the lyric 'throw the shade away' describing Nici's modus operandi. In coaxing new work into the light, the shadow of dispossession and colonisation is recast.

One example of this was at the launch of Tarnanthi in 2023, just days after the failed Australian Indigenous Voice referendum, which proposed altering the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament. On this occasion the keynote speaker, artist Robert Fielding, and performer Dan Sultan offered a salve to the sorrow and weight of this new reality. Fielding gave Tarnanthi a new call to action – to rise up, to become that new light in a time of darkness and urged us to be 'united as one – Iriti Kuwari Ngula – past, present and future'.

We rise, we come forward – and we lead.

Today is about honouring our Elders, their ability to rise and stand strong – again and again.

It's about remembering what they have taught us, are still teaching us today.

It is to the memory of my Elders, their achievements, their battles, their hurts, that I call for a minute of silence before proceeding, a minute of remembering our unity, of gathering strengths for the days to come, for the generations to come ...

Tarnanthi is exactly what it claims to be:

This, here, today, is our collective voice rising and telling our story.

And whilst it is hard to stand here whilst so many of us are in Sorry Business, remember that we create for our community, our family, our people, but we also create for every single one of you:

Art is the ground upon which we can always stand united ...

Our culture and our spirit is ever present. It is in the land, in our actions and in our stories.

It shines through all hardship. It shines through all lies, it shines through attacks and it shines through all hate. When I see this light shining through, I see the true spirit of this country. I see the true spirit of our story and I see the tili (light) that will continue to guide this nation.⁶

Cultural connections are always two-way, and in 2019 Nici was able to work closely with fellow Barkandji artist Uncle Badger Bates after initially connecting with him in 2010 when both exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. For Tarnanthi 2019, Nici invited Uncle Badger to 'rise up' – to take his carving skills, first released on emu eggs at the tender age of three, into a new domain, resulting in an installation that included printmaking and a constellation of wood and shell carvings. Titled *Ngatji parripaningku* (*Rainbow Serpent travelling about*), Uncle Badger translated a lino print into three dimensions, conjuring Ngatji, the Rainbow Serpent travelling across Country.



Electric Fields performing at the launch of Tarnanthi 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Ben Searcy

Working in timber and 'walking the knife' – the expression he uses to describe his carving – connects Uncle Badger to the old people, and allows him to 'give the River love' (the title of one of Uncle Badger's linocuts). His work is river writing, as he explains:

I was born in 1947 and was brought up by my grandmother on the Barka, or Darling River. This artwork is about my beginnings, my continuing connection to the Barka and my life as a Barkandji person ...

When I go to the river, I sit down and when I start cutting a wanna (boomerang) the breeze will come and I know the old people are there, Granny and them, the old people. And the tree knows what it's going to do. It's going to give me something, and the leaves start blowing and I just cut a boomerang. And I tell the river, you know, thank you for doing this. And this tree was here when I was a little fella, I'm coming back now and I cut a boomerang and I respect the tree because it has given me something, and that's why I like working with river red gum.

Because of the connection to the river, it's who we are, and we just one of them trees really.⁷

Badger Bates with his work *Ngatji parripaningku*
(*Rainbow Serpent travelling about*), Tarnanthi 2019,
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed



The culture of care that underpins Tarnanthi is dispersed across partners, with dozens of organisations involved since 2015. In 2022 the partnership model went regional with the appointment of Wangkangurru woman Marika Davies as Tarnanthi Regional Curator, in an innovative partnership between AGSA and Country Arts SA. Nici had first met Marika earlier this century at Tauondi Aboriginal Community College in Port Adelaide and, like Nici, Marika is both an artist and a curator. The relational curatorial model that Nici employs has been embraced and expanded across regional South Australia by Marika. Where Nici traverses the country catching new light and new talent, Marika travels the many nations within the state of South Australia. *Saltbush Country*, a highlight exhibition of Tarnanthi 2023 and now on a statewide tour, presented new work by artists⁸ from at least seven Aboriginal nations in a contemporary articulation of Aboriginal life in regional South Australia. Like the festival more generally, the Tarnanthi regional initiative's expanded field includes education, workshops, mentoring and professional development opportunities for regional artists, educators and broad audiences.

Today, ten years on, Tarnanthi has its own ecology – ambitious, intergenerational and embracing of both emerging and established artists working in any medium. Syncopating the biennial festival – where new work is presented from across the country in large-scale exhibitions throughout the spaces of the Art Gallery of South Australia – has been a series of monographic exhibitions. These too have introduced an intersubjective dimension to the curatorial process, underpinned by ongoing negotiation between artists, curators and communities.

Across the past decade there have been three monographic projects – *Riverland: Yvonne Koolmatrjie* in 2015, *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new* in 2018 and *Vincent Namatjira: Australia in colour* in 2023. These exhibitions, two of which have toured nationally, have shed new light on the work of these established and celebrated Australian artists and offered new opportunities for collaboration. In 2015 AGSA invited Jonathan Jones and Hetti Perkins to work with the Tarnanthi team on the first survey of Koolmatrjie's work.

Riverland: Yvonne Koolmatrjie was a comprehensive survey exhibition of the work of master Ngarrindjeri weaver and internationally esteemed artist Yvonne Koolmatrjie. The exhibition featured more than sixty works of art created using the labour-intensive process of hand-harvesting and weaving the raw material of spiny-headed river sedge (*Cyperus gymnocaulos*), gathered from the banks of the Murray River in South Australia. Following a river of suspended eel traps, visitors embarked on an immersive journey through a remarkable artistic practice spanning three decades. Unique woven forms also included ponde (Murray River cod), yabbie traps, echidnas, turtles, burial mats, sister baskets and even a biplane and a hot-air balloon. The project's curatorial team, comprised of curator and writer Hetti Perkins, artist-curator Jonathan Jones and Nici Cumpston, developed the exhibition in close consultation with Koolmatrjie. The exhibition was accompanied by a fully illustrated publication, edited by Genevieve O'Callaghan, who also transcribed extensive interviews with the artist. Aunty Yvonne's grandson Isaac Lindsay, an aspiring filmmaker and editor, was engaged to assist in the exhibition development and created a short film to accompany the exhibition.

This expanded, familial curatorial model extended into the education program, with an intergenerational offering led by Lee-Ann Buckskin and Carclew, titled *Pilbilli*, the Ngarrindjeri word for the sedge that Aunty Yvonne uses for weaving. Children aged between eight and twelve years from Hampstead Primary School learnt about Ngarrindjeri art and culture directly with Elders, including Uncle Moogy Sumner and Aunty Yvonne, over a series of workshops.

Saltbush Country participating artists Lynette Newchurch and Deanna Newchurch at Point Pearce, South Australia, 2023
photo: Sam Roberts

pp. 28–9: Installation view featuring *Riverland, Yvonne Koolmatrjie*, Tarnanthi 2015, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed





The students learnt about the River Murray and the environmental and sustainable practices Ngarrindjeri have always taken to manage this vital resource. They also heard directly from Aunty Yvonne about her love of weaving, the importance of maintaining this cultural tradition and how she incorporates traditional techniques to make traditional and contemporary forms. The students prepared questions and recorded interviews with Aunty Yvonne, which were developed into an audio tour for the public. This provided the opportunity for the students to be empowered and to learn important exhibition development skills, as well as the chance to learn directly from the artist's perspective.

Co-curator Hetti Perkins noted the significance of Aunty Yvonne's decades-long practice in revitalising cultural knowledge and broadening cultural understanding:

Now widely acknowledged as the doyenne of Ngarrindjeri weaving, Yvonne Koolmatrie learned the critical first stage of Ngarrindjeri weaving at a one-day weaving workshop in 1982, conducted by the elder Dorothy Kartinyeri. Since that time, she has revived and reinvented the once-endangered cultural practice with an impressive corpus of works that harness the fluidity of tradition and innovation. Yvonne's creative ambassadorial role in promoting her culture saw her represent Australia at the Venice Biennale in 1997 and honoured with the retrospective exhibition *Riverland*, for the 2015 edition of Tarnanthi.⁹

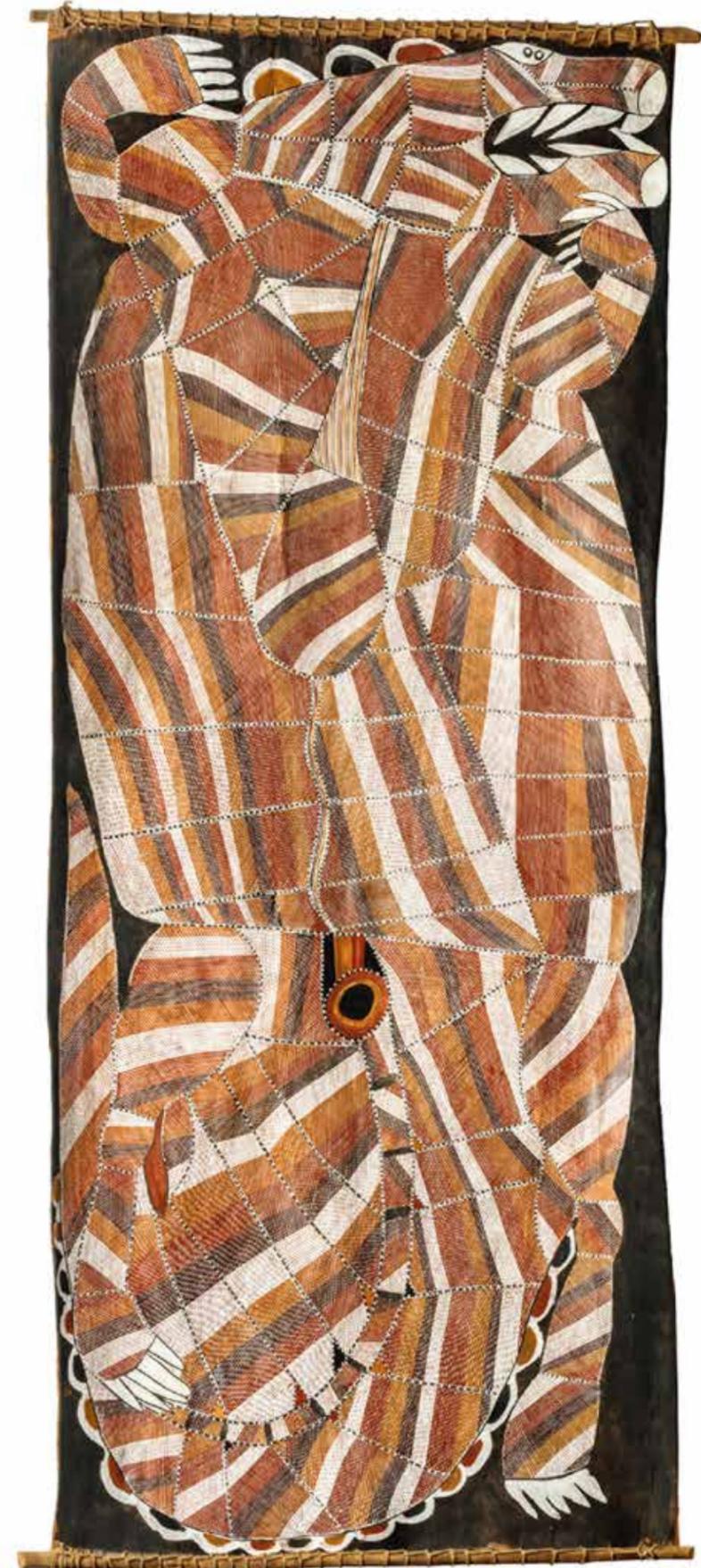
In 2018 Tarnanthi worked with Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and Maningrida Arts & Culture to stage the major survey *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new*, which reunited works of art from national and international collections made across a forty-year career. John Mawurndjul AM (often known by his skin name Balang) led the development of this exhibition, which also mobilised a curatorium – a collective curatorial approach – across all three organisations. This included a commitment to describing in Kuninjku (and English) places of special cultural significance to the artist and the communities that resurface time and time again in his art-making. A comprehensive website, johnmawurndjul.com, shares this lasting legacy. This exhibition emerged from visits on Country, with the selection of works, and the title *I am the old and the new*, decided by Mawurndjul for his own show. As he explained:

The old ways of doing things have changed into the new ways. The new generation does things differently. But me, I have two ways. I am the old and the new.¹⁰

Mawurndjul's close friend, translator Murray Garde, reflected on the level of Mawurndjul's agency in developing the exhibition:

Balang John Mawurndjul's last exhibition, which toured from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and then to the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2018–2019 and on to various regional galleries throughout Australia, represented the peak of achievement and recognition for this, one of Australia's most important artists. As Balang's interpreter, I accompanied him to Darwin, Sydney and in Maningrida during all of the planning meetings that extended over three years leading up to the MCA grand opening. It was an intense period of work for him that involved him being reunited with the collection of his life's works, which had returned from all corners of the world. This exhibition marked his decision to retire from producing artwork. The exhibition *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new* was a celebration of all he had achieved in one extraordinary lifetime.

John Mawurndjul, Kuninjku people, Northern Territory, born Kubukkan near Marrkolidjban, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 1952, died Maningrida, Northern Territory 2024
Namanjwarre, saltwater crocodile, 1988, Mumeka, central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 206.0 x 85.0 cm (irreg.)
 Maude Vizard-Wholohan Art Prize Purchase Award 1988
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © John Mawurndjul/Copyright Agency, 2019
 photo: Saul Steed





Artist Vincent Namatjira painting on Country, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, 2022
photo: courtesy of Iwantja Arts

For the Kuninjku people of western Arnhem Land, art traditions and the interpretation of cultural emblems are considered intellectual property jointly owned by clan and family groups. It was therefore in keeping with this tradition that Balang's sister Susan Marawarr and his kakkak (sister's daughter's daughter) Janet Marawarr were present in Adelaide at the opening of the AGSA exhibition and able to speak on his behalf with authority about Balang's art. As part of Kuninjku tradition, Balang unpretentiously ensured that the production of his art and all its benefits were to be the joint property of his whole community, and further, to be enjoyed by the whole world.¹¹

In 2023 this artist-led approach was repeated with the first survey exhibition of work by Western Aranda artist Vincent Namatjira. In addition to selecting his preferred works for display, Namatjira engaged with the collections of Flinders University, AGSA and the National Gallery of Australia to select works of art by his great-grandfather, Albert Namatjira, to include in the exhibition titled *Vincent Namatjira: Australia in Colour*. Most of these had never been seen by Vincent and hence the very act of access represented a critical step for him in returning home, of symbolic repatriation. Visits to the collection stores of art museums also facilitated a face-to-face moment, whereby Vincent had the chance to see the work of his great-grandfather across his prolific career – to bear witness to the various stages in his art-making (from carved artefacts to watercolour apparitions) and to 'measure up' his own development in light of this. Ushering in the major exhibition, AGSA partnered with the Illuminate Adelaide festival in 2022 to transform the Gallery's neo-classical façade into a moving portrait of people and place in Vincent Namatjira's *Going Out Bush* (p. 193). Here the colonial façade of the Gallery was temporarily relocated to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands where, 'out bush', the building became a stage set for a series of encounters in which the Aboriginal flag took pride of place and ghost gums grew, a tribute to Albert, as AGSA's new architectural columns. This work materialised the principles of 'shedding new light on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art' and 'throwing shade away with light' to a new level, with almost a million people experiencing the sound and light work. As Vincent Namatjira stated:

For me, the canvas is a setting where I can combine the past, present and possible futures, and I can put myself – as a proud Aboriginal man – at the front and centre of a situation where we would usually be out of sight.¹²

This approach was writ large across the exhibition, which premiered as part of Tarnanthi at AGSA in 2023 before its presentation at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. It underscored the role of the curators and institutions in bringing artists into dialogue with their own histories – in this case, a family history that was wrought asunder by the colonial paternalism and control that removed Vincent from Country and into non-Aboriginal care as a young boy. This use and misuse of power has become an abiding, and somewhat controversial, aspect of Vincent's work, with parody and humour part of his decolonising armoury. As he states:

I'm interested in painting strong figures and leaders, we see them on the news and wonder how and why they make their decisions. These powerful people are far away from us here on the APY Lands, but when I paint them it brings them right into the studio. I like to paint with a little bit of humour, humour takes away some of their power and keeps us all equal.¹³

Vincent Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1983
Albert Namatjira, Slim Dusty and Archie Roach on Country, 2022, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 167.0 x 198.0 cm
Prudence Lee Bequest Fund 2023
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist, courtesy of Iwantja Arts and Ames Yavuz
photo: Saul Steed





When looking becomes seeing

Today, Vincent lives on Anangu Country and the deep wellspring of Anangu art has been a recurring source for Tarnanthi. The 2010 exhibition *Desert Country*, Nici's first major curatorial project at AGSA, kindled connections across the Lands that have ignited new opportunities and brought to light new work across a decade and a half. This kindling was furthered during *Heartland*, a survey exhibition of contemporary art from South Australia that the two of us co-curated and presented at AGSA in 2013. At the physical and conceptual centre of the show was an installation of paintings and tjanpi (grass) sculptures, the installation of which was led by senior Anangu women artists Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Iluwanti Ken and Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan. On a visit to Tjala Arts by the co-curators in 2012, the footprint of the AGSA exhibition spaces was mapped to the art centre's footprint in Amata, so that the artists could plan where and how their work would be experienced. A physical model was created by Wiradyuri/Kamilaroi contemporary installation artist Jonathan Jones on one of his visits to the art centre, evidencing once again the expanded curatorial approach. The three senior women used it to place the Tjala artists' works and to determine how they wanted their story to be shared with the audiences. This spirit of collaborative, collective curating fed into the next decade of Anangu art in Tarnanthi.

left to right: Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan and Iluwanti Ungkutjuru Ken at Tjala Arts, Amata, in 2012 as they plan for the 2013 exhibition *Heartland* at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Tjala Arts



See p. 36 for caption

At around the same time that the senior women artists were determining the shape and direction of the presentation of their work, senior Anangu men in Amata had begun working with Jones, after seeing him present his own work to audiences at the 2011 Desert Mob symposium at Araluen in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). The senior men had already begun working intently with younger men in their communities to continue the art of making traditional weapons – kuḷaṭa (spears) and miru (spear throwers). In 2012, the Elders invited Jones to work with them on developing their ideas further and to assist them in presenting their work in a contemporary art context. They knew that the contemporary art world was a place for them to speak about important issues and to have a platform to bring their ideas to new audiences. Experiencing the conceptual and physical presentation of Jones's work led them to realise that thinking big could be an important way forward for them as artists.

The decision to engage Jones facilitated the step from the perceived souvenir or craft-object status of puṇu (work made from wood) to the contemporary art context, thereby negotiating a new sphere of reception for the work. This act of transposition, from weapon to work of art, evident in the practice of Jones and Anangu artists, is best articulated by Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton when she explained:

When I was a girl there was kuḷaṭa around us, all the time. Kuḷaṭa tjuṭa (many spears) of all sizes being made and, more importantly, kuḷaṭa making being taught by the fires. Well, today it's like my childhood again on the Lands, with old men teaching young men to make spears. The spears are hard work to make; the skills have been passed down from men, one generation to the next. Traditionally the men used the spears to hunt, today they tell stories. With the spears the men make installations. Hundreds of spears together, used with light and sound. Through the spears, the old men are telling important stories of Country, culture and Law.¹⁴

This pedagogical intent – with the senior men teaching the younger men – has coincided with, and been catalysed by, an expanding field of contemporary art opportunities for Anṅangu artists. Increased exhibition opportunities and greater exposure to art installations across the country, alongside Anṅangu participation in art fairs and art awards, have led to this rethinking of the place of the kuḷaṭa. As a contemporary artist with an installation-based practice, Jones supported two artistic outcomes – the first of which was included in the 2014 *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Dark Heart*, curated by Nick Mitzevich at the Art Gallery of South Australia, and the second, an outdoor contemporary art installation and inma (cultural performance) on the grounds of Government House for the Art Gallery of South Australia's first Tarnanthi Festival, in 2015. These were the first two iterations of the *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* (many spears) project.

The decision by the senior men to hold the event on the grounds of Government House, adjacent to Parliament House, was a symbolic marking of the struggle that led to the *Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act 1981*. Many of the artists had been in Adelaide decades before to press for the land rights legislation to be enacted, and during that time had camped along the river behind Parliament House and Government House.

The suspension of spears in the 2014 project gave way in 2015 to the vertical grounding of the spears, becoming at once a projection screen and a *mise-en-scène*. Whereas kuḷaṭa previously occupied a liminal role between weapon and souvenir, through these installations and performances they were recast as contemporary art objects – and as return fire. In the words of initiator Mick Wikilyiri:

Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa means 'many spears'. When Anṅangu talk about Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa, we are talking about what we must fight for, and what we protect above all else. This is what is most important to Anṅangu. Through Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa, we protect Tjukurpa, Manta, Walytja – Law, Country, Family. This is what is most important.¹⁵

And as project initiator Kunmanara (Willy) Kaika Burton stated:

We know if culture is strong, Anṅangu will continue the fight with a strong spirit. Young men have always learned to make kuḷaṭa (spears) through the old men, and through the old men like me, the fight will continue for a better future for Anṅangu.¹⁶

These principles of intergenerational knowledge and cultural continuity are shared by the project and by Tarnanthi writ large. In 2017 the *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* project reached a point of significant culmination with the presentation of a major installation and accompanying moving-image work, again as part of Tarnanthi (pp. 114–15). In this work, now held in the collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia, 550 kuḷaṭa made by Anṅangu men are suspended in an explosive formation, which hovers above a circular installation of hand-carved piti (water carriers) made by Anṅangu women, in an artistic response to nuclear weapons-testing on

illustrated p. 35:
 Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Watarru, Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944
 Naomi Kantjuriny, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Victory Downs, South Australia 1944
 Kunmanara (Niningka) Lewis, Pitjantjatjara people, Northern Territory, born north of Areyonga, Northern Territory 1945, died Mutitjulu, Northern Territory 2020 [only *Paarpakani (Take flight)*]
 Rene Kulitja, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia/Northern Territory, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1958
 Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Atila (Mount Conner), Northern Territory 1949, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2023
 Kunmanara (Paniny) Mick, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Rocket Bore, Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1939, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2022
 Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Rocket Bore, Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2025 [only *Tjanpi Punu (trees)*]
 Tjunkaya Tapaya, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Antalya, Northern Territory 1947 [only *Paarpakani (Take flight)*]
 Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1956
Paarpakani (Take flight)
 2011, near Amata, Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
 raffia, minnarri grass, buffel grass, wire, wood, poly-caffia, string, wipiya (emu feathers), twigs, wool, fake flowers, bush turkey feathers, alpaca wool, second-hand fabric, plastic rake, felted wool, branches, dimensions variable
Tjanpi punu (trees)
 2012, near Amata, Anṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
 tjanpi (native desert grasses), acacia branches, chicken wire, acrylic wool, unspun sheep's wool, wipiya (emu feathers), raffia, paper raffia, plastic flowers and leaves, gumnuts, pillow stuffing, mulga stumps, wire, synthetic polymer paint, second hand clothing, dimensions variable
 Gift of Margaret Bennett, Vivienne Bolaffi, Elizabeth Finnegan OAM, Lipman Karas, Shane LePlastrier, Sue Tweddell and Ann Vanstone through the Art Gallery of South Australia Collectors Club 2012
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © the artists, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council
 photo: Grant Hancock

p. 37: *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* inma and installation, Government House, Adelaide, Tarnanthi 2015
 Courtesy Art Gallery of South Australia and Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Ninuku Arts, Tjala Arts and Tjungu Palya
 photo: Ben Searcy



Country. Internally lit from a single light source, the radiating spear shafts cast shadows onto the surrounding walls, proliferating the artistic effect and impact and drawing an analogy to the cumulative and mushrooming consequences of the atomic bomb testing on Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Country between 1953 and 1963, directly referenced in the work. At once mesmerising and gut wrenching, this installation immediately evoked the power of art to share our deep, dark history. In the accompanying six-channel moving-image work, many artists spoke publicly for the first time about their lived experiences, their deeply personal conversations interspersed with footage that takes the audience on an immersive journey through Anangu lands.

Born in Woomera in the prohibited weapons-testing area that encompasses the Maralinga atomic tests site, Kokatha/Nukunu artist Yhonnie Scarce responded to her own family history with a major glass installation, *Thunder Raining Poison*, in the first Tarnanthi exhibition at AGSA in 2015 (pp. 99, 105, 109). Over 1500 hand-blown glass yams suspended from the ceiling and emitting a glistening bluish light, representing a dissipating atomic bomb cloud, met audiences as they descended the staircase. Here the art museum registers not as a place of loss or absence, but as a place of presence and ‘presencing’ – an exhibition-making practice of community and cultural engagement, explored by Yamatji curator and academic Stephen Gilchrist, which seeks to counter the erasure of an object’s meaning, title or maker’s name or of past experiences.¹⁷ In the context of the *Kulaṯa Tjuṯa* project and Scarce’s *Thunder Raining Poison*, this can refer to the historical amnesia associated with the frontier wars and the unauthorised atomic testing on Aboriginal land. For both projects, their presentation in Tarnanthi initiated the first of many subsequent installations.

Lauded as a breakthrough work in the 2017 Tarnanthi Festival, this iteration of *Kulaṯa Tjuṯa* was a significant turning point. The work presented itself as a response to the question of what happens when a tradition of weapon-making, spanning thousands of years, becomes contemporary art. In his response to the 2017 work, Professor Stephen Muecke described it as ‘a kind of artistic “payback”’. In circling around the atomic events, it becomes its own event with past and future ramifications.¹⁸ But this project had to be restorative for Anangu and, in the intersubjective space, where the roles of artist and curator are flexing and reforming, restoration emerges. As said by the late artist Mrs Kaika Burton, ‘Why is this story important for future generations? Well, the story maps Country and tells Anangu the secrets of that Country along the map, but the benefit of the story goes far further than this.’¹⁹ In 2025 the National Gallery of Australia installed the latest iteration of the project. Titled *Tirkilpa*, a word that describes the rattling of spears in preparation for battle, this iteration underscores that, for Anangu, the battle continues.

Mrs Kaika Burton goes on to comment on the importance of the *Kulaṯa Tjuṯa* project for Anangu women. In a lineage of histories written by men about men, she says, ‘this is a story about strong women. It is about women looking after each other, and working together to stay safe.’²⁰ In this statement, Kaika Burton was calling up and bringing into being a future project. Titled *Kungka Kunpu*, this Tarnanthi touring exhibition, which commenced in 2022 and ‘took flight’ across the country over coming years, began with the holdings of work by Anangu women in the AGSA collection as the starting point. Critically, artists’ engagement included the performance of inma at each regional venue and hence the ceremonial was positioned as a curatorial axis. The title was drawn with permission directly from another Tarnanthi premiere, this time the *Kungka Kunpu* film project by the Iwantja artists. As described by lead artist Kaylene Whiskey:

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton with the installation *Kulaṯa Tjuṯa*, Tarnanthi 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Rhett Hammerton





We want our film project to show a strong, positive message about life in a remote Indigenous community. Us young women here in Indulkana love to dance and have fun and make each other laugh. We're proud to live on our land and hold on to our culture and our language. It's a wonderful group of artists, and we love working together. We're really excited to do a special project that involves lots of girls and young women in our community.²¹

The intersection of two of the aforementioned curatorial strategies – the relational and the intergenerational – is amply witnessed in the projects presented, since Tarnanthi's inception, by Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre, based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), which represents the descendants of Albert Namatjira and his contemporaries from Ntaria (Hermannsburg). In 2019 *Tjina Nurna-ka, Pmarra Nurna-kanha, Ila Ila Nurna-kanha: Our Family, Our Country, Our Legacy* brought together Iltja Ntjarra with the Flinders University Museum of Art. Tarnanthi curator-in-residence, Western Aranda woman Marisa Maher, worked with the Flinders team to develop an exhibition that spoke to the legacy of Albert Namatjira, placing recent and decades-old paintings in a dialogue across time and place. Leading up to this outcome, Maher had also led the titular repatriation of works in the Adelaide-based collections – works that had previously held generic titles, or no titles at all, were identified and geo-located by current-day artists, whose family members had made the work. In this act of 'presencing', the anglo-centric curatorial enterprises of the twentieth century were overthrown by a culturally nuanced return or re-presentation of the works, so that today they carry precise and culturally pertinent titles and attributions. Albeit modestly, this project attempted to reverse a history of cultural loss in which the institution is complicit in the removal of cultural material from Country.

left to right: Iwantja women artists Kaylene Whiskey, Leena Baker, Leonie Cullinan and Betty Muffler celebrate the *Kungka Kungpu* film project, 2019
Courtesy the artists and Iwantja Arts

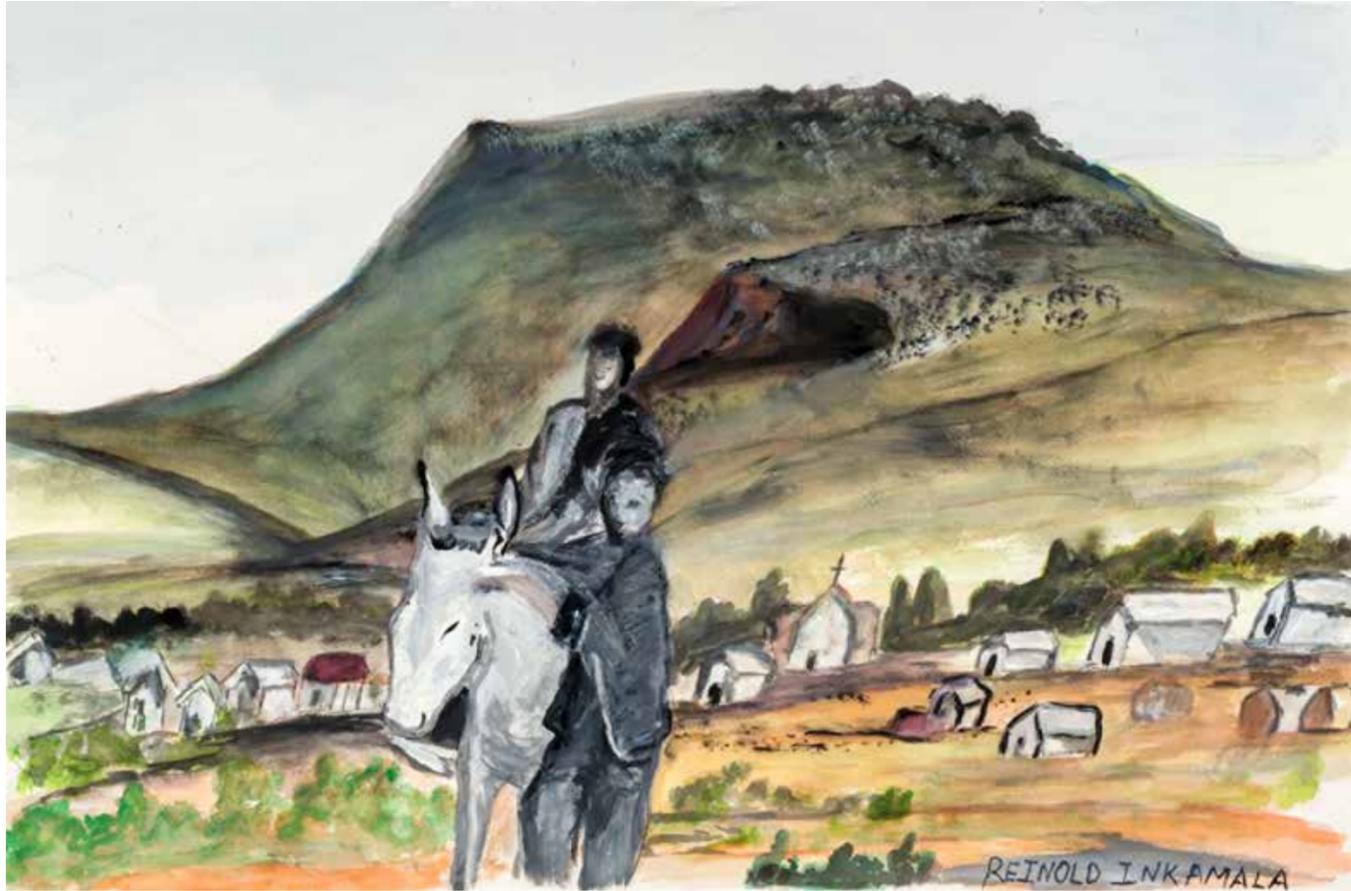
Marisa Maher in the *Kuprilya Kwatja Etatha (Kuprilya Living Water)* display by Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre artists, Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed

In 2021 Maher and artists from Iltja Ntjarra returned to the Tarnanthi fold to work on the Kuprilya project. Curated by her and assisted by Melbourne-based artist Tom Nicholson, the project's chapters traced the history of the Kuprilya pipeline, including the time before the introduction of Christianity. Running between the sacred Kuprilya Springs and Ntaria (Hermannsburg), the Kuprilya Springs pipeline (sometimes spelled Kaporilja) guaranteed water for the Lutheran mission and its community. To this day, the pipeline is the subject of an annual celebration known as Kuprilya Day, held on 1 October, when the Aranda community gathers at the spring to mark the moment when water was first piped to Hermannsburg, in 1935.

The project took its cue from Albert Namatjira's boomerang depicting the making of the pipeline, held in the South Australian Museum's collection. Placed centrally in the installation, the historic work became the fulcrum for contemporary watercolour paintings and drawings, paintings on boomerangs and a short film by the current generation of Aranda artists working at Iltja Ntjarra. The fact that the first work of art by an Aboriginal artist acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia, in 1939, was by Albert Namatjira, just a few years after the pipeline was introduced, underscores the intergenerational curatorial caveat at work. Alongside celebrating the importance of cultural continuity, Maher, a descendant of the Pareroultja brothers, reminds us of the environmental changes that colonisation has also wrought. She says:

It's a different timeline ... When Albert was painting, the Country was different. Now wild horses come through and damage the land and buffel grass grows everywhere. Trees are cleared for the powerlines that are coming in on Country.²²





Just as Central Australia has been a recurring source for Tarnanthi, so too has the Top End, with the constellation of art centres across Arnhem Land adding their own voices to each festival iteration. In 2017 a project from Buku-Larrngay Mulka saw Yolŋu innovation in the work of Ishmael Marika and the late Mr Wunurŋmurra enliven and redefine the anthropological archive – specifically the almost century-old recordings of anthropologist Donald Thomson. This temporal collision of the old and the new signalled the continuity and change inherent in Yolŋu culture. This seeming paradox was brought to light in 2019 with the downstairs gallery spaces showcasing recent Yolŋu art. The first monumental magenta bark paintings by Mrs N Marawili, painted with pigment salvaged from printer toner cartridges, premiered, as did the interactive installation by Mr W Wanambi, in which hundreds of tiny fish swam from the painted larrakitj (memorial poles) and encircled viewers' feet. This work embodied Djambawa Marawili's assertion that 'All living things have a gurruṯu',²³ presenting Yolŋu cosmology as both profound and purposeful. In this same year, *Dhawuṯ*, which means 'fly away' in Yolŋu Matha, was another exhibition within an exhibition, presenting twenty-eight major bark paintings commissioned by the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia. The title was chosen as the works were created by the artists for the major United States touring exhibition *Maḡayin: Eight Decades of Aboriginal Australian Bark Painting from Yirrkala*.

p. 42: Reinhold Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1974
Old Hermannsburg Mission from the series *What if this photograph is by Albert Namatjira?*, 2017, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory watercolour on paper, 36.0 × 54.6 cm (image) Gift of Ruth Ellis through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2018
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © the artist, courtesy of Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre
 photo: Stewart Adams

p. 43, detail: Wukun Waṅambi, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Yirrkala, Northern Territory 1962
Trial Bay, 2018, Yirrkala, Northern Territory earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*), 240.0 × 30.0 cm (diam.)
 Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth
 © Wukun Waṅambi/Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre
 photo: Nat Rogers





When sensing becomes understanding

In 2020 Tarnanthi commenced with Nici's compulsion to weave – both literally and metaphorically. It had been twenty years since she first wove for a project called *Weaving the Murray*, an intercultural project that explored the textile practices of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists. This time, weaving came as a way of thinking through the exhibition *Open Hands* as it was developing. Something happens when your hands are making: things open up inside you and the mind is freed to make connections. Busy hands enabled Nici's thinking to happen. This curatorial framework was eagerly embraced by the artists. Elisa Jane Carmichael described being guided by her ancestors when making. She said, 'I think of open hands as an ongoing connection with our land, waters and cultural practices. Our hands connect us with our ancestors'.²⁴

In the exhibition Carmichael and her mother Sonja Carmichael, from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) on Quandamooka Country, used weaving and string-making techniques to create delicate woven forms. The Carmichaels extended this millennial object-making into image-making, with the very elements required for the growth of their materials – water, sun and salt – redeployed as active agents in the cyanotype process to create 'blueprints'. Combining plants and shells with objects made and found, the mother-and-daughter team use the cyanotype process to register or index their culture. Inherently rematriative, the cultural material that was forcibly removed to museum collections was returned and released to family and Country. As a family member, curator and writer Freja Carmichael states, 'in this work, my family visually returns Quandamooka woven bags to their home'.²⁵

The transference from one sense or modality into another – from looking to seeing, listening to hearing, and sensing to understanding – as a way of working curatorially has been one of the revelations from Tarnanthi. This isn't just a curatorial model, it's a way forward for us all. It relies on risk taking, empathy and trust. Embracing this philosophy will only continue to build new opportunities for art and artists. Tarnanthi has been built upon a succession of beginnings and, with support and understanding, new histories and new futures await.

Installation view featuring works by Sonja Carmichael and Elisa Jane Carmichael, including cyanotypes on fabric, Tarnanthi 2020, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Grant Hancock

pp. 46–7: Installation view featuring *Wagupini larrakitj* by Nawurapu Wunurmurra, Tarnanthi 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Saul Steed

Postscript:

Tarnanthi's latest project builds on the past as it looks to new futures in new places. *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi* is an exhibition at the Art Gallery of South Australia that celebrates artists who have featured in past Tarnanthi Festivals, along with works by them that have been acquired for the AGSA collection. A selection will form a major national touring exhibition, also titled *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi*, which will travel to galleries across the country from 2026.

- 1 Judith Ryan, 'Abstraction, meaning and essence in Aboriginal art', *Art and Australia*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1997, p. 77.
- 2 Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 1995, published in Obrist, *A brief history of curating*, JRP|Ringier and Les Presses du réel, Zurich and Dijon, 2008, pp. 80–100.
- 3 Andrew Taylor, 'Paul Keating calls for blending of black and white Australia to create new national identity', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 October 2015.
- 4 Yarrenyty Artere Artists, 'Every face has a story, every story has a face: Kulila!', in *Tarnanthi 2017* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2017, p. 174.
- 5 Lewis Yerloburka O'Brien, 'Panpapanalya', in *Tarnanthi 2015* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2015, p. 13.
- 6 Robert Fielding, Tarnanthi keynote address, 19 October 2023, AGSA website, <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/tarnanthi/tarnanthi-2023/tarnanthi-robert-fielding-keynote-address/>, accessed April 2025.
- 7 Badger Bates, 'Giving the River Love', in *Tarnanthi 2019* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2019, p. 50.
- 8 Josephine Lennon, Marli Macumba, Juanella McKenzie, Deanna Newchurch, Lynette Newchurch, Sandra Saunders and Heather Shearer.
- 9 Hetti Perkins, email correspondence, 24 March 2025.
- 10 Murray Garde, 'I am the old and the new: John Mawurndjul in conversation', in *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and AGSA, 2018, p. 49.
- 11 Murray Garde, email correspondence, 13 March 2025.
- 12 Catherine Speck, 'Vincent Namatjira's paintbrush is his weapon', *The Conversation*, 24 November 2023.
- 13 Vincent Namatjira, 'Gina, Donald, Malcolm, Obama and Me', in *Tarnanthi 2017*, p. 82.
- 14 Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, 'Spreading like wildfire: the Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa Project in the APY lands', *Art Monthly Australasia*, issue 298, May 2017, pp. 32–3.
- 15 Mick Wikilyiri, 'Introduction', in *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* catalogue, AGSA and APY Art Centre Collective, Adelaide, 2020, p. 44.
- 16 Kunmanara (Willy) Kaika Burton, 'Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa Project', in *2014 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Dark Heart* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2014, p. 108.
- 17 'Awakening objects and indigenizing the museum: Stephen Gilchrist in conversation with Henry F. Skerritt', in *Contemporaneity: Historical Presence in Visual Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2016, p. 115, <https://doi.org/10.5195/contemp.2016.183>, accessed April 2025.
- 18 RTG Minor Cosmopolitanisms 'Summer School Sydney 2018' program, session 3, 13 February 2018, University of Potsdam website, <https://www.uni-potsdam.de/en/minorcosmopolitanisms/activities/summer-school-sydney-2018/program>, accessed April 2025.
- 19 Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Tjunkaya Tapaya & Hannah Kothe, 'Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters', in *Tarnanthi 2017*, p. 36.
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 Hannah Presley, 'Iwantja artists: young women's film project', in *Tarnanthi 2019*, p. 74.
- 22 Marisa Maher, Nic Brown & Madeline Reece, 'Tjina Nurna-ka, Pmarra Nurna-kanha, Itla Itla Nurna-kanha: Our Family, Our Country, Our Legacy', in *Tarnanthi 2019*, p. 72.
- 23 Quoted in Nici Cumpston & Lisa Slade, 'Universal connections, infinite possibilities', in *Tarnanthi 2019*, p. 26.
- 24 Quoted in Nici Cumpston with Lisa Slade, 'Tarnanthi 2020: Open Hands', in *Tarnanthi 2020* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2020, p. 20.
- 25 Freja Carmichael, 'Wunjayi (today)', in *Tarnanthi 2020* catalogue, p. 40.



Five seasons of Tarnanthi

Una Rey

In 2015 I wrote that imagining Australia's newest art festival 'before its revelation is like painting a cloud map of the sunrise in the hours before dawn'.¹ My poetic response expressed hope and excitement for what felt like a big investment in celebrating Aboriginal Australia's artistic virtuosity. Now – suddenly – we have a decade of evidence to reflect on Tarnanthi's daylight achievements, but of course, the story is much longer than ten years, and long-term climate change would be a better analogy than a daily weather forecast. The point of this short essay is to try to weave them both together.

Two ideas are widely applied to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art: that it is simultaneously 'traditional' and 'contemporary', and that it is unequivocally political. Admittedly, these one-liners have become clichés, but clichés often contain a kernel of truth. In this case they provide entry points for new and younger audiences of this dynamic art movement and purchase for emerging First Nations artists, writers and curators making their way and place in the art world.

When South Australian artist, Elder and cultural ambassador Robert Fielding launched the Tarnanthi Festival in 2023 by saying 'art is the ground upon which we can always stand united', he was speaking in truly bipartisan terms that go to the heart of Tarnanthi. And while he was talking of sorry business and solidarity in the context of the disappointing Voice referendum result – the symbolic '60% say NO' to First Australians – Fielding was implying the deeper past and a hopeful future. What else can we do? As Sarah-Jane Norman wrote in relation to their *Stone Tape Theory* project in Tarnanthi in 2015, memory is a loop on playback, continually rewriting itself, its data in perceptual oscillation such that 'our ability to perceive and understand the present is contingent on our ability to narrativise the past'.²

Tarnanthi is the recent fruit of a South Australian tradition, even invention. Long before I ever visited Australian Central Standard Time, I learned from vehicle numberplates that South Australia was The Festival State. That story begins in 1960 with the launch of the Adelaide Festival ('the Festival') and 'the Fringe' festival. Thirty years later in 1990, AGSA implemented the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art ('the Biennial') to boost the Festival's visual art content, and to invest in more Australian artists' participation in critically curated contemporary survey exhibitions.³ The same year, South Australian artist Trevor Nickolls made history with Rover Thomas as the first Aboriginal artists to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale. While Adelaide's inaugural Biennial included only six Aboriginal artists in a total of thirty-eight, small by today's tallies, it came as the art world was on the threshold of a monumental shift from its eurocentrism to recognition and celebration of all world cultures.

From the 1990s, Indigenous Australian artists and their global counterparts turned the tables on the contemporary art world through visually potent art, which vibrated with the frisson of urgent and previously silenced narratives. In the South Australian context, this was powerfully signalled in *Beyond the Pale: 2000 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art*, an all-Indigenous program curated by Brenda L. Croft in a definitive call for the new century.

Western Arrernte artist and Elder Robert Fielding delivers the keynote speech at the launch of Tarnanthi 2023, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Sam Roberts



Tarnanthi arises

Born in the wake of the short-lived Adelaide International multi-venue visual arts festival (2010–14), the potential of a multi-venue First Nations visual arts festival was envisaged by AGSA Director Nick Mitzvitch and his creative team, supported by South Australia's then-Premier Jay Weatherill. Both parties grasped that this would further enhance the city as a cultural destination, just as Brisbane had done in 1993 with the Asia Pacific Triennial.

The structure of the Tarnanthi Festival – with Nici Cumpston's curated exhibition at AGSA presenting new and recent works, along with a vast program of parallel exhibitions across the city and state – has since delivered a cornucopia for audiences. The model operates particularly well in Adelaide, a twenty-minute city with a population of just under 1.5 million, which has a good critical mass of small and medium-sized galleries, teaching institutions and cultural centres available to opt in as partners. Over the decade leading up to its tenth anniversary festival in 2025, Tarnanthi has attracted over 2.2 million visitors in a state with a population of 1.8 million.

While some critics questioned the 'newness' of Tarnanthi and its art, it is the first state gallery-supported project of its kind. It takes its cue from relations to the north: the high-stakes Telstra-sponsored art prize 'the NATSIAAs' in Darwin, running since 1984, and Desert Mob in Alice Springs, which since 1991 has evolved a dynamic program of exhibitions, symposiums and an eagerly attended art fair. Responsive to both artist-fostering, income-producing events, Tarnanthi is also a centralised survey of recent First Nations art. Across its five seasons, supported by strong documentation and substantive scholarship, it has been a cousin to Canberra's National Indigenous Art not-quite-a-Triennial.⁴ As it stands, almost every notable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist working this century has been profiled in Tarnanthi – some more than once – and there have been significant historical inclusions. In its entirety, Tarnanthi encapsulates a substantial record of the previous decade, both creatively and politically.

There has been plenty to reckon with over Tarnanthi's lifetime. Rewinding to 2015, some will remember when former Australian of the Year and legendary Adnyamathanha football player Adam Goodes was widely attacked for his performative spear-dance during the AFL Indigenous Round. Others might recall the federal government spending big on the Anzac centenary commemorations and Australian War Memorial director Brendon Nelson declaring that 'Every nation has its story. Australia's story is told here' at the AWM.⁵ He was forgetting how many nations Australia represents, and how many artist-citizens have alternative stories to tell. And they are well armed.

Art as a weapon? Art as healing?

Each Tarnanthi season has attracted favourable reviews, with critics singling out works of distinction and those which strike a particular zeitgeist. It's an impossible task to touch on all the exceptional work, and other essays in this catalogue cover much of that ground. However, in 2019 art historian Darren Jorgensen represented a widely expressed view, that:

As long as Aboriginal politics remains on the sidelines of Federal Government concern, this art movement will remain charged with the politics of representation and recognition. It is impossible not to see Tarnanthi as a devastating reminder of the diversity and dynamism of Aboriginal history.⁶



Marlene Gilson, Wathaurung/Wadawurrung people, Victoria, born Warnambool, Victoria 1944
The long walk, 2024, Gordon, Victoria
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 100.0 x 120.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2024
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Marlene Gilson, courtesy of Martin Browne
Contemporary
photo: Saul Steed



p. 52: Nici Cumpston OAM, Richard Bell and Dominic Guerrera at *Embassy*, 2022, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Saul Steed



p. 53: Richard Bell, Kamilaroi/Kooma people, northern Riverine region, Jiman/Gurang Gurang people, northeast region, Queensland, born Charleville, Queensland 1953 *The Sign Says It*, 2017, Brisbane synthetic polymer paint on linen, 200.0 x 200.0 cm Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane photo: Saul Steed

Reviewing Tarnanthi 2023 for *The Saturday Paper*, Claire G. Coleman seized on painter Vincent Namatjira's remark that 'art is a weapon', not surprisingly, given the political atmosphere of the post-referendum opening weekend with its thousands-strong assembly of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander exhibitors in town:

In this forever war, the strongest weapons my people – our people – have are art and story. This is a conflict of story and of negotiation. Whether intended or not, the art in Tarnanthi is a counterstrike: it says, you mess with our rights, we mess with your soul. When you try to destroy us with hate, we fight back with love.⁷

I imagine love is just one of the emotions that have inspired the 9477 artists who have participated in Tarnanthi across the festival's first decade.⁸ As far as it is possible to identify an overarching style or defining quality to these diverse, ambitious and sometimes experimental works, it's the complexity and range of ideas and media that offer insight, as well as pleasure, empathy and, yes, despair on occasion.

Weapon as metaphor is logical, but art stops short of maiming its audiences. As Adelaide critic Stephanie Radok observed during Tarnanthi's inaugural season, 'art as a healing, constructive, community-building activity was very strong.'⁹ The therapeutic has been a naturally evolving theme through the entire creative program and Aboriginal languages have been central. Ali Cobby Eckermann's impressions from AGSA's floor in 2020 could translate to many Tarnanthi spaces:

Stand here and know that an interruption is being repaired. mara milbul wuryay (hands alive today). Stand before the magnificence of this thought, witness the manifestation. I smile that mara means the same in Quandamooka and Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara languages.¹⁰

Sandra Saunders, Ngarrindjeri/Boandik people, South Australia, born Millicent, South Australia 1947
The Poor Fish, 2019, Wangary, South Australia
oil on linen, 60.8 x 91.4 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist



The Money Story

It's tempting to think of Adelaide's premier event as the latest rich kid on Aboriginal Australia's art circuit. That means we need to talk about BHP. Nowhere is the BHP-AGSA deal more visible than at Tarnanthi's opening celebrations, which have been launched by high-status keynote speakers, who have included Paul Keating, Stan Grant, Djambawa Marawili, Tanya Hosch and Robert Fielding.

At the 2023 launch when BHP's Jennifer Purdie took the stage, she acknowledged the Kaurna hosts and then acknowledged by name the Aboriginal custodians of the lands on which BHP assets are located: assets which place them among the richest mining companies on the globe. The enduring support of the resource company, as principal sponsor, has helped deepen engagement, invest in development, nurture careers and create opportunity. Laying the corporate script aside, BHP has tipped money into Tarnanthi since the start, an investment in social value in line with its Global Indigenous Peoples Framework.¹¹ This has propagated ambitious art projects, educational resources, artists' travel and financial returns, and the harder-to-measure long-term benefits for artists, art centres and communities, which is only possible with sustained support.

These two sides of Tarnanthi's coin – the cultural and the capital – reflect the contemporary minefield that artists, philanthropists and arts institutions must navigate, now more than ever. AGSA's approach to working with artists and other partners involves full disclosure and transparency regarding funding sources. The process illustrates an awareness of the risks implicit in all cultural and corporate partnerships today, and AGSA's responsibilities to their exhibiting artists. Similarly, BHP's policy of 'free, prior and informed consent' with internal and external stakeholders demonstrates a company genuinely engaged in cultural change. It is testament to both organisations that, in an age of ideologically motivated cancellations and boycotts, Tarnanthi and BHP have stayed the course. Robust commitments to First Nations artists and their communities are the common ground on which the partnership's success is built.

Big mining presents a soft target, but we are all implicated in modern economic systems (as long as we clutch a rare-metal-rich mobile phone), and sponsorship does not automatically assume censorship. Tarnanthi has staked its reputation on providing a culturally safe, open platform for artists to express themselves on all matters, including protesting extraction, climate change, land theft and ecological vandalism, as a close reading of the works of art across the years proves.

And then we go shopping! Along with the Panpapanpalya conference for First Nations participants, Tarnanthi's Art Fair creates an atmosphere of interactive exchange across the opening weekend, with an online presence since 2021 following the COVID pandemic. Attracting a wide range of visitors, the marketplace event offers a microcosm of remote art centres, the Torres Strait Islands sitting alongside the Western Desert. Ahead of the 2025 Art Fair, cash returns to artists and art centres have reached over \$8.5 million. Not weapons but envoys: art for sale, direct from the artists, with money going directly to the artists, is the sunny side of Aboriginal economic enterprise. It represents the money story in action – a rare opportunity for connections between far-flung allies and an authentic, transactional pleasure.



Tarnanthi 2023 Art Fair at Adelaide Entertainment Centre
photo: Michael Jalaru Torres



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Kunmanara (Tiger) Yaltangki and Vincent Namatjira with students from Indulkana Anangu School, Tarnanathi 2023 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Sam Roberts

The record and the reach

In drafting this essay, I've returned to the Tarnanthi catalogues and been reminded of the breadth and depth of the curatorial essays and artist statements, short texts, interviews and poetry. Collectively, the volumes document major works developed and toured as a result of the festival, and they double as a growing library of First Nations writers. A key objective of Tarnanthi is building this community of multidisciplinary arts practitioners, which includes writing, editing and publishing projects. This work is further enriched by the photographic portraits of artists, on Country and/or in their studios, holding the reader's gaze, in full and proud possession of their creative projects. They are the First Nations artists, agents and communities who have flourished through Tarnanthi's patronage. The affiliation has provided opportunities for new story-making and imaginative professional challenges. As APY Lands artist Yarritji Young put it, 'the role of the artist is the same in cities as it is in the bush – it's a respected position'.¹²

Relationships are repeatedly cited as core to Tarnanthi's success as the people's festival, with an artistic director 'uniquely receptive to the art and artists, not subject to the dictates of fashion or ideology', as one Sydney critic put it.¹³ But relationships are not made by institutions, corporations or funding bodies. They are made by people. One of the not-so-secret weapons is the team at AGSA, and commentators have been unanimous in pointing to Nici Cumpston's 'inclusive largesse of vision'.¹⁴ In collaboration with longtime AGSA Assistant Director Lisa Slade, Cumpston has honed the fine art of collaborative, horizontal curating.

Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi is a tribute to the visible and the invisible work behind all the artists' spectacular marks. Wherever Tarnanthi's future lies, its place in the canon of Australian art festivals/biennials/surveys is assured.

1 Una Rey, 'Desert salon', in *Tarnanthi 2015* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2015, p. 49.

2 Sarah-Jane Norman, 'Stone tape theory', in *Tarnanthi 2015* catalogue, p. 167.

3 The first Adelaide Biennial opened at the time of the last week of the 8th Biennale of Sydney, titled *The Readymade Boomerang: Certain relations in 20th century art*.

4 The National Gallery of Australia's National Indigenous Art Triennial, launched in 2007, ran every five years between 2007 and 2022. Its fifth iteration is scheduled in December 2025.

5 '2015 sees record number of visitors to the Australian War Memorial', Australian War Memorial website, 4 December 2015, <https://www.awm.gov.au/media/press-releases/2015-sees-record-number-visitors-australian-war-memorial>

6 Darren Jorgensen, 'Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art', *Artlink*, 28 November 2019, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4794/tarnanthi-festival-of-contemporary-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art/>

7 Claire G. Coleman, 'Tarnanthi 2023', *The Saturday Paper*, 4–10 November 2023, <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/culture/visual-art/2023/11/04/tarnanthi-2023>

8 Figure supplied by AGSA. It includes artists exhibiting at AGSA and all partner venues and participating in the Art Fair, from 2015 to March 2025.

9 Stephanie Radok, 'Tarnanthi Festival', *Artlink*, 1 December 2015, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4420/tarnanthi-festival/>

10 Ali Cobby Eckermann, 'Tarnanthi: Open Hands', *Artlink*, 30 November 2020, <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4869/tarnanthi-open-hands/>

11 The framework was adopted in 2015 and revised in 2023; see *BHP Annual Report 2023*, pp. 65–6.

12 'Tjala Tjukurpa', in *Tarnanthi 2017* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2017, p. 58.

13 John McDonald, 'Surprises, eccentricities and dazzling variety, this exhibition stays in the mind', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 December 2021, <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/tarnanthi-2021-surprises-eccentricities-and-dazzling-variety-20211212-p59guq.html>

14 Jorgensen, 'Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art'.

Yaritji Tingila Young with *Tjala tjukurpa – Honey ant story* at Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, in 2021
© Yaritji Young/Copyright Agency, 2025
photo: Luke Byrne

pp. 62–3, detail: Beryl Nyuniwa Jimmy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Kaltjiti (Fregon), South Australia 1970, died 2022
Nyangatja Watarru, 2016, Watarru, South Australia pigment print on paper, 150.0 × 240.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Beryl Nyuniwa Jimmy, courtesy of Tjunga Palya/
Copyright Agency 2025
photo: Leopold Fiala





Tarnanthi
at the Gallery

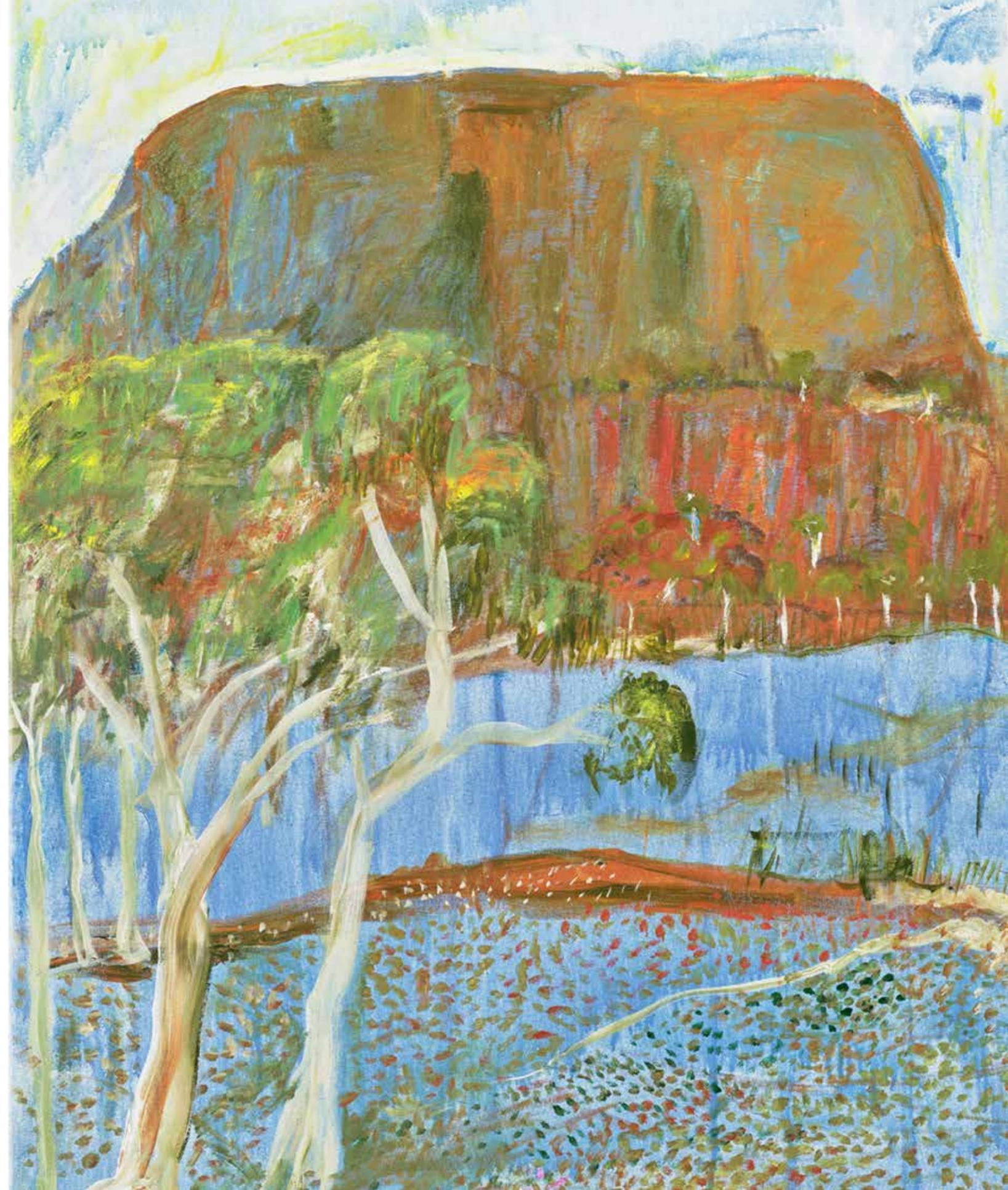
Jessyca Hutchens

When Wendy Hubert speaks with me about her painting practice, the memories come in thick and fast. A recurring one is a time when she ran off as a teenager by jumping on the back of a truck of high-stacked wool bales, tying herself in for the bumpy ride ('like a bull ride') and barely managing to stay on board.¹ Her paintings, predominantly landscapes, are dense with washy, scratchy strokes, filling in the scene from multiple directions – like the world rushing past, or being conjured from the fleeting, energetic spirit of memories coming up. Up and down.

I titled this essay 'psychedelic pastoral' as a way to bring together tendencies that stretch across the four artists it addresses: the whirling cultural mash-ups of John Prince Siddon, the memory landscapes of Hubert's depictions of Yindjibarndi Ngurra and surrounds, Nyaparu (William) Gardiner's memorialisation of Pilbara giants – stockmen and strikers – and Motorbike Paddy Ngal's large-scale capture of the muster as a maelstrom of riders and cattle. While the latter three more directly capture something of the 'pastoral' – turning their gaze in different ways to Country and people changed by the vast pastoral industries – Siddon gives us the 'psychedelic' in his mind-bending compositions – cornucopias of beings, people and animals that have been thrown together under the colonial horizon. If Siddon is perhaps an outlier in this selection, it is one that pulls at the experimental and spatio-temporal distortions present across the other works. None of these works of art is a simple historical scene, even if they reference the past. Rather, memories come vibrant, fuzzy and restless. Like Hubert's wool bale ride, time bumps up and down, arriving from the past into the present like a runaway horse. Memories that won't sit still.

Jeanette Hoorn writes how the term 'pastoral' in an Australian art context has particular connotations, namely relating to depictions of large-scale animal grazing and its attendant landscapes and characters – stockmen, droving, sheep and cattle, homesteads, pastures and sometimes bushrangers.² Such themes also hold a particular place within Australian First Nations art, with artists such as Mervyn Street and Motorbike Paddy Ngal renowned for their sublime and highly personal portrayals of the stockman's life. Given that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and labour are almost entirely missing from settler portrayals, such works form a significant counter-narrative. Despite this, the language of the Australian pastoral largely persists in describing these works, sometimes missing the unique aesthetic and political interventions these artists make. If the settler pastoral largely romanticises Australian agriculture and 'the bush' while occluding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land and labour that made it possible, an Indigenous pastoral must grapple with a life on Country conditioned by this exploitation. Far from the bucolic, the Indigenous pastoral is unwieldy and defiant – picturing the unpaid workforce, the maintenance of relationships to Country, and employing experimental aesthetics to capture the drama of the muster with a deft sensitivity towards people and animals and their relationships.

Wendy Hubert, Yindjibarndi people, Western Australia
born Red Hill Station, Guruma Country, Western
Australia 1954
Nyun-nhuu-nha, 2024, Ieramagadu (Roebourne),
Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 98.0 × 79.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2025
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Wendy Hubert, courtesy of Juluwarlu
photo: Saul Steed





John Prince Siddon, Walmajarri people, Western Australia
born Derby, Western Australia 1964
Australia: Mix it all up, 2019, Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 120.0 x 240.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© John Prince Siddon
photo: Saul Steed



Motorbike Paddy Ngal's panoramic depictions of mustering and droving use a striking monochrome palette of reddish pink on white to paint out an array of stockmen, cattle and their movements. A blending of foreground and background, figure and place occurs across the canvas, with shadowy, smudgy impressions formed as red and white paint mix together in certain deliberate moments. Whether suggestive of fast movements, obscuring whirls of dust or layers of depth, a relation seems to accrete between a figure and its trace. Whether this is literal sand kicked up, a shadow on the land or the blur of galloping, there is a kind of overall agitation in the scene. While providing something of an aerial view, his paintings refuse a singular perspective point, instead seeming to tilt and spin us around the action from roughly the centre, more of a whirlpool than a window onto the scene. The fuzzy edges and blending forms add to this effect – some parts still and clear, some a stampede of frenetic action. If settler pastoral scenes tend to incline the viewer towards a kind of removed surveying of a picturesque landscape, Ngal's works are by contrast phenomenological, relational – throwing us into the middle of the action.

Motorbike Paddy Ngal, Anmatyerr people, Northern Territory, born Sandover Region, Northern Territory 1938
 p. 70: *Cattle to Mt Isa – Amaroo Station, 2022*, Urapuntja, Northern Territory
 synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 215.0 × 152.4 cm
 p. 71: *Cattle to Mt Isa – Muster, 2022*, Urapuntja, Northern Territory
 synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 215.0 × 152.4 cm
 Prudence Lee Bequest Fund 2024
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Motorbike Paddy Ngal/Copyright Agency 2025





Nyaparu (William) Gardiner's *Jack. He can do anything*, 2018, also contains moments where edges blur and time flickers. It depicts one of his characteristically jaunty figures, wielding a lasso against green land and pale-blue sky. Multiple, overlapping, sketchy rings of a lasso and a disappearing right hand suggest a circular motion, captured across time. Repetitions of the blue of his shirt and grass-green of his pants into the background hues, and ambiguous sketchy green trails on the ground that mimic the motions of the lasso, create moments of temporal-spatial instability in the image. Small slippages of linear time. Jack looms tall, with a hard-set expression against the sky, but the scene below whirls around, like a memory being lifted into consciousness, sharper in some places than others.

Darren Jorgensen, quoting former Spinifex Hill manager Greg Taylor, has written how Gardiner 'captures the "slow time" of the North West, sitting in the heat of the day, walking through the country and holding a horse's reins'.⁶ This is a time less of earlier station work and its exploitative conditions and more of the world during and after the 1946 Pilbara strike – waiting and wondering, life at the strike camps and struggles for self-sufficiency. His painting is almost post-pastoral – instead of workers within epic station scenes, his portraits remember key figures of the strike movement and from his life. He paints them in a way that suggests their stolid and stoic gravitas, yet they also blur into land and memory – fuzzy, tilting, even spectral at times. And always so skinny and long-legged, as though seen from the perspective of a child looking up at a beloved grandfather. *He can do anything*. Australian heroes.

Nyaparu (William) Gardiner, Nyangumarta/Warnman/Manjilyjarra people, Western Australia, born Brockman River, Western Australia 1943, died South Hedland, Western Australia 2018

p. 72: *Our Old People*, 2018, Spinifex Hill Studio, South Hedland, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 × 122.0 cm

p. 73: *Jack. He can do anything*, 2018, Spinifex Hill Studio, South Hedland, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 × 101.5 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Nyaparu (William) Gardiner, courtesy of Spinifex Hill Studio
photo: Saul Steed



Speaking with Wendy Hubert about her work *Stockman and the first flight over the Pilbara*, 2024, a plethora of interweaving stories come up – a narrative density gestured at in the image itself, which could be seen to contain multiple scenes and timelines, with sketchy figures seen at different depths, groups doing different kinds of station work. She talks about a reunion with a grandmother, her brother learning to milk the cows, and about the central figure, the man in the black hat, and his seven sons (one of whom helped her when she was sick as a child by feeding her goanna).⁷ Like many of the life stories underpinning Hubert's work, these are stories of both displacement and holding together, of upheaval and getting on with things. While the top third of the canvas shows a more linear story – a blue sky with a plane flying across, seeming to move in a more-or-less straight line across the horizon – the world below is a web of activity, with ghostly sketched-out figures moving in and out of it, performing stories we might just get a snippet of.

The memory paintings of these artists become a kind of psychedelia in their bumpy restlessness, pulling from the past in a more freewheeling and interruptive way than a romanticised history painting or nostalgic pastoral landscape. They bring us the bumpy ride of postcolonial landrelations and memorialise unrecognised Australian heroes through the fuzzy yet energetic patina of memories that won't sit still.

1 Wendy Hubert, interview with Jessyca Hutchens, Fremantle, Western Australia, 3 December 2024.

2 Jeanette Hoorn, 'Joseph Lycett: the pastoral landscape in early colonial Australia', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no. 26, 1986, republished at <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/joseph-lycett-the-pastoral-landscape-in-early-colonial-australia/>, 24 June 2014.

3 Emilia Galatis, 'Mixing it up: Prince's Australia', in *Tarnanthi 2021* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2021, p. 114.

4 Tristen Harwood, 'From landscape to landrelation', in Marcia Langton & Judith Ryan (eds), *65,000 Years: a short history of Australian art*, Thames & Hudson Australia, Cremorne, Victoria, 2024, p. 304.

5 John Prince Siddon quoted in Galatis, 'Mixing it up', p. 110.

6 Darren Jorgensen, 'Slow time: Nyaparu (William) Gardiner and the strike camps of the Pilbara', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, p. 84.

7 Hubert, interview with Jessyca Hutchens.

Wendy Hubert, Yindjibarndi people, Western Australia, born Red Hill Station, Guruma Country, Western Australia 1954
Stockmen and the first plane over the Pilbara, 2024, Ieramagadu (Roebourne), Western Australia
 synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 97.0 x 78.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2025
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Wendy Hubert, courtesy of Juluwarlu
 photo: Saul Steed





Nganana watjalpai ‘Nyangatja kaltja nyuntu ngula inkama, miri tjutaku kaltja nyangatja.’ Inma tjitji nintilpai rawangku kanyintjaku, uwa nguraku kulira.

We always say to our young people ‘This is our culture, make sure you keep on singing in the future, because this here is your ancestors’ culture’. We teach the children these songs and dances so they can continue to carry on these traditions and to understand their Country.

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri

Ngayulu tjitji kulupa nyinangi ka minyma tjutangku inma irititja ngananana-nya tjitji tjuta wangkapai tjunguringkula inma-ku pakanytjaku. Panya tjana nganananya nintilpai inma-ku ka nganana kuwari nganampa ngapartji nintini.

When I was little, the old ladies used to sing dreaming songs from a long time ago. They would tell us kids to get up and join in with inma (song and dance), they would teach us, and now we are teaching our grandchildren.

Angkuna Baker

Ngayulu nintiringu inmaku iriti mulapa ngayuku mama, ngunytjungka tjungu nyinara tjitji kulapa. Ngayulu inma kantulpai mununa inma kulu inkapai panya. Ngayulu tjukarurungku wirura inkapai mununa inmakantulpai. Palu kuwarina scooter-ngkalta para ngarangi mununa inma kutjulta inkanyi.

I learnt inma from my parents a long time ago when I was a boy. I was always a good dancer. I sing too, and my singing is very good. I’m in my motor scooter now, so now I just do the singing.

Alec Baker

Iwantja Inma – Song, Dance, Ceremony, 2024, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
three-channel video, 7 minutes, 26 seconds
© the artists, courtesy of Iwantja Arts
photo: Jackson Lee

pp. 77, 78–9: *Iwantja Inma – Song, Dance, Ceremony*, 2024, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
three-channel video, 7 minutes, 26 seconds
© the artists, courtesy of Iwantja Arts
photos: Jackson Lee

Kana kuwari nyanga ngayulu ma-pamparingu mununa mukuringanyi kungkawara munu yangupala tjuta nintinytjikitja inma inkanytjaku. Panya tjana ngapartji nintiringkunyitjaku nganampa culture-ku munu tjukurpa-ku. Ka paluru tjana ngapartji tjanampa tjitji kulu puliri, pakali mala tjuta nintinytjaku.

Now that I’m quite old, it’s my job to teach the young girls and young fellas how to do inma. They are learning our culture and stories so one day they can teach their grandchildren too.

Maringka Burton

Translations by Valerie Cullinan and Priscilla Singer

Text reproduced from *Iwantja Inma – Song, Dance, Ceremony*, published by Iwantja Arts in 2024 as part of the Iwantja Inma cultural maintenance project and accompanying the *Iwantja Inma* film.

The Iwantja Inma project was initiated and led by Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri to renew inma (cultural song and dance), with a series of events that were simultaneously performance, celebration and intergenerational teaching tool. These inma sessions in Indulkana, in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, lit a fire in the community’s younger generations, with Mungkuri’s project inspiring a resurgence of song, dance and ceremony. The project is upheld by Alec Baker, Angkuna Baker, Betty Muffler, Hughie Cullinan and Maringka Burton.



Nyunmiti Burton

Panya nganampa kuruntu ngananganya nyanganyi nganampa ara tjuṯa atunymankunyangka.

Panya ngayulu ngayuku tjukurpatjara walkatjunanyi munu inma inkanyi ngayuku nguratjara kanji ngayunya nyanganyi. Ka minyma panya mayatja tjuṯaya manta nyanga nguruya ngananganya wantikatingu panya. Paluru tjana kuwari inkakatinyi nganangala tjuṅgungku.

APY Art Centre nyangatja minyma tjuṯangku tjaatamilanu nyanga paluru panya Ngura iriti-nguru alatjitu. Kuwaripa-tjara panya 1948-pangka panya minyma tjuṯangkunya tjaatamilanu craft room nyangatja Pukatja (Ernabella-la) malaku panya minyma tjuṯangkuya tjiipiku inyu tjuṯa tarakangku ngalya-katinyangka wati tjuṯangku tjiipiku inyu tjiramilantjangu.

Kaya minyma tjuṯangku tjiipiku inyu rungkalpai munuya raka palyalpai munuya patiki kulu palyalpai. Palulanguru wiipamilalpai munu inyu munu craft paintamilalta wirkanu. Palulanguru minyma panya tjuṯangku tjaatamilantja ngura malangku Pukatjala (Ernabella Arts).

Palulanguru minyma panya tjuṯangkuya tjaatamilanu craftroom nyangatja Pukatjala Centregka (Ernabella Arts) ngura kutjupa tjuṯanguruya nyakula urulyarangingi. Palulanguru mayatja panya kuliningi panya ngura uwankarangka alantjaku. Kaltjiti Arts alanu Fregonta, Iwantja Arts tjaataringu Indulkanala, munu Minymaku Arts Amatala palulanguru ini tjaintiringu Tjala Arts palulanguru Pipalyatjarala munu Tjuṅgu Palyanya tjaataringu Nyapari-la. Tjuṅgu nguwanpa Mimili la tjaataringu Mimili Maku Artspa.

Ngura uwankarangka kutjunga kutjunga Art Centretangu. Ngura kutjupa kutjupanguruya tjukurpa walytjangku walytjangku tjakultjunanyi tjukurpa pulka tjuṯa pulkara warkarinytja munu palyantja. Kuwari nguwanpa wati munu minyma tjuṯa panya APY communitiesngka nyinanytja tjuṯaya walytjangku Art Centreguru. Wati munu minymaku ara wiru mulapa munu nintintja kuḷu. Wati munu minyma tjuṯangku panya ara tjuṯa wiru mulapa panya nintiningi kuḷu. APY Centre kuwari ngaranyi ngura uwankarangka APY tjuṯa kutjukulpi tjaataringu warka pulkanguru munu nganaga pulkara pukularinyi panya nganampa walytjangku walytjangku palyara.

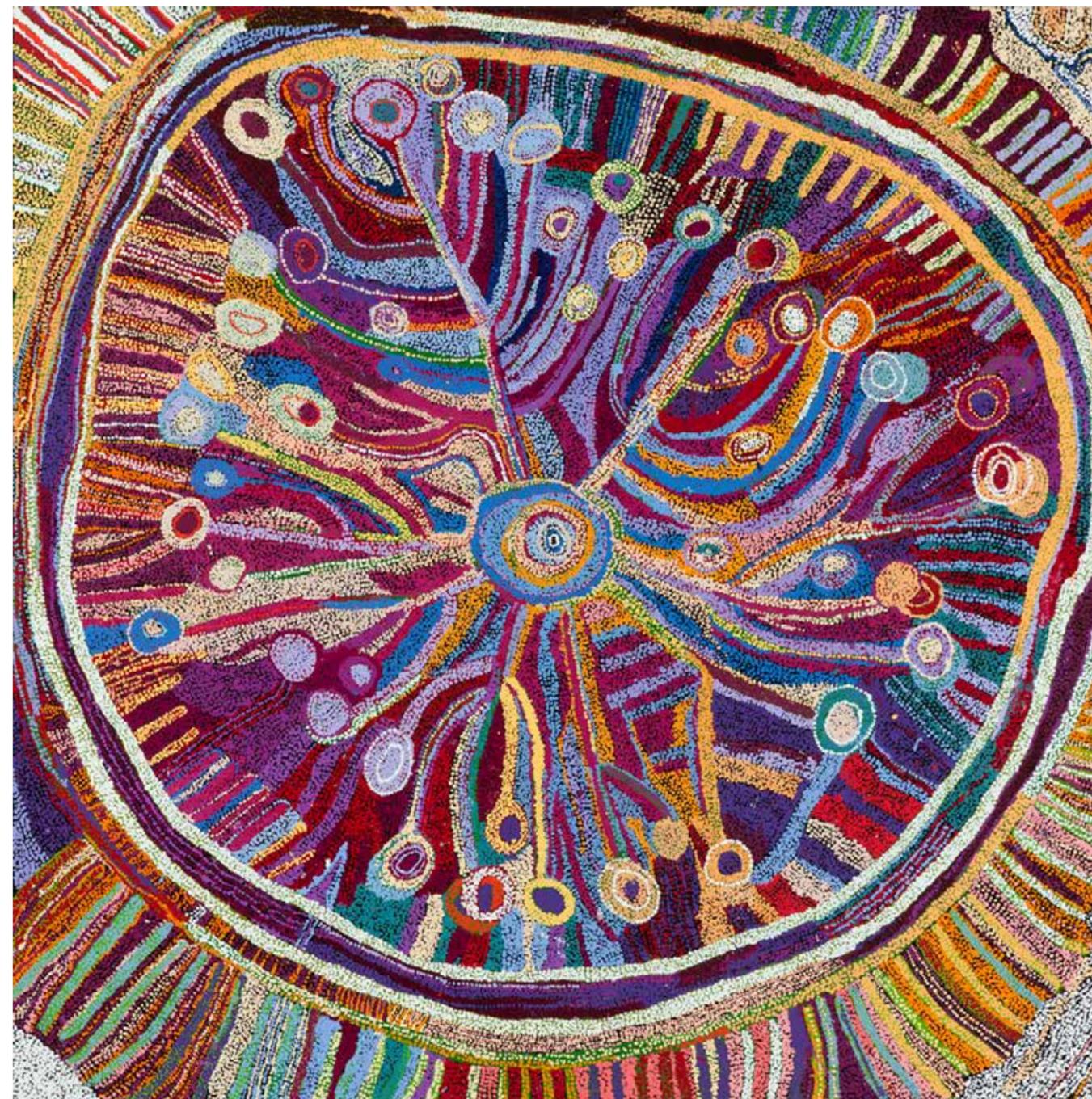
The spirit of our ancestors watches over us as we celebrate our culture. When I paint my tjukurpa (law, culture and creation stories), when I sing the songs of my Country, I feel the spirit of the ancestors watching me. The women leaders of the Lands who went before us sing alongside the women of today. We feel their presence as they watch over us and our Country.

APY art centres were started by women, a long time ago now, before my time. In 1948 the women started the craft room in Pukatja (Ernabella Arts). Back then, the women used to gather the discarded sheep's wool that got stuck in the wire fences as the men sheared sheep. The women would spin the wool and turn it into rugs. Following this, there was tie-dye, then batik, weaving and wood crafts. Painting came later.

After the women started their art centre in Pukatja, it generated a lot of excitement, and leaders knew that all communities would need a similar place. Kaltjiti Arts opened in Fregon, Iwantja Arts started in Indulkana, and then Minymaku Arts in Amata – the name was later changed to Tjala Arts. After this, Ninuku started in Pipilyatjara/Kalka and Tjuṅgu Palya in Nyapari. At the same time, Mimili Maku Arts was starting in Mimili.

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1925, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021
Ngayuku ngura – My country, 2012, Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia synthetic polymer paint on linen, 195.0 x 195.0 cm
Gift of Lisa Slade and Nici Cumpston 2013
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton/Copyright Agency, 2025
photo: Stewart Adams

pp. 82–3, left to right: The Ken Family – Tjuṅkara Ken, Sandra Ken, Freda Brady, Marinka Tunkin, Yaritji Tingila Young and Kunmanara (Paniny) Mick – with their collaborative work *Kangkura-KangkuraKu Tjukurpa – A Sister's Story*, 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Ken Family Collaborative/Copyright Agency, 2025





Each art centre has its own unique story, with local leaders doing the hard work and making it happen. Today almost all men and women who live in APY communities are involved in their art centre. Men's and women's cultures are joyfully celebrated and carefully instructed in art centre studios all over the APY Lands. The art centres all started small, but with the hard work and commitment of Anangu, they grew strong and are still growing today. We are proud that there are so many innovative, brave and committed artists working on the APY Lands.

This is an edited version of an essay first published in the *Kulaja Tjuta* catalogue (Government of South Australia with APY Art Centre Collective & Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2020, pp. 68–70). It was republished in the *Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)* catalogue (AGSA, Adelaide, 2022, pp. 26–7).

Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters

Nyunmiti Burton

Ka nyanga Seven Sister tjukurpa kungkarangkalpa titutjarangku kulintjaku panya mulapa nyangatja minyma uwankaraku. Ka kuwari mulapa alatjitu ngaranya iriti nguru alatjitu ka tjukurpa nyangatja kulira minyma uwankara pukularira leader wiru kunpu mulapa ngaranya. Ngayulu pukulpa leader ngarala panya tjukurpa nyangangu nintini mulapa. Ngayulu kuwari Director ngaranya APY Executive Board munu NPY Women's Council munu APY Art Centre Collective.

Nganana minyma uwankarangu wanganarangu minyma nganmanyitja tjuta kulintjaku panya minyma nintipuka tjutangu tjukurpa nyanga palunya kunpu kanyining. Nyangatja kangkurungku malanypa tjuta atunymanangi kurangkatawara. Ka atunymankunytja nyanga palunya kuwari ngaranya manta winkingka panya kangkuru pulkangu malanypa seven atunymanangi kutju malarinkunytja wiya uwankara atunymanangi. Ka kangkurungku uwankartu atunymanangi uwankara pukulpa nyinanytjaku. Tjukurpa nyangatja minyma kangkuru pulkangu minyma malanypa seven (Kungkarangkalpa) atunymanangi. Ka nganana Anangu leader uwankarala. Kuwari manta nyanga Australia nyinanyi. Panya minyma paluru tjanaya tjungu alatjitu nyinangi. Ka tjananya minyma kangkuru pulkangu minyma malanypa tjuta kuangkatawara kumpira katirinangi iwara palyangka wankaru alatjitu. Paluru nintingu alatjitu. Katirinangi munu nintirinangi tjukaruru ankunytjaku. Nyangatja witulya munu kunpu minyma leader kunpu tjutaku.

Nyangatja minyma leader kunpu uwankaraku ka kuwari nganana leader kunpu tjuta ngaranya munula iwara wiru tjuta palyani minyma malatja malatja tjutaku tjana ngapartji leader kunpu ngaranytjaku munu palyantjaku tjitji palumpa tjanampaku.

The Seven Sisters story has always been important for Anangu women and it is more important today than ever before. It is a story that celebrates women's leadership. I am proud of my leadership role. This is very serious work. I work as a director for APY (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Council and for NPY (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Women's Council. I am one of the founding directors of the APY Art Centre Collective.

Anangu women respect Elders, like the oldest sister from the story. The Seven Sisters story teaches women about the importance of respecting the women who came before you. The women with expertise and experience. This is the oldest sister, and her leadership guided the other sister away from the dangers of the world. The oldest sister made sure that the seven sisters stayed together and that no one was left behind. The oldest sister protected everyone and made sure all the women were safe. This was the oldest sister's story and it is the story of all Aboriginal women leaders in Australia today. The women stayed together and the oldest sister ran with the young women escaping the dangers – she showed them how to escape by running into the night sky.

detail: Nyunmiti Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1960
Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters, 2020, Adelaide
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 290.0 × 290.0 cm
Gift of Anna Baillie-Karas, Mary Choate, Amanda Harkness, Jacqui McGill, Peter and Pamela McKee and Zena Winsler through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 20th Anniversary Collectors Club 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Nyunmiti Burton/APY Art Centre Collective
photo: Grant Hancock



This is the power of women leaders. We can make all the women coming behind us fly.

This is an edited version of an essay first published in the *Tarnanthi 2021* catalogue (AGSA, Adelaide, 2021, pp. 42–4). It was republished in the *Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)* catalogue (AGSA, Adelaide, 2022, pp. 44–5).

Kungka Kunpu

The Tarnanthi exhibition *Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)* toured nationally for two years, showcasing exemplary paintings, woven sculptural installations and moving-image work created by more than sixty women artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands of South Australia. It shared inspiring tales of women supporting each other across generations, exemplified by the Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters) story about women who travel together and look after each other.

To develop this exhibition, the Art Gallery of South Australia has worked closely with artists and their art centres in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in northern South Australia. This exhibition builds on more than fifteen years of collaboration in which AGSA has worked with APY artists, art centres and communities on projects that have developed local, national and international networks and opportunities ...

AGSA's Tarnanthi projects, including those held internationally, are artist-led, with the artist always in control. Consultation is continual, deep listening is vital. Whether talking with artists, supporting their projects or presenting their completed works of art, Tarnanthi follows five guiding principles: Let the artist's voice shine; Open mind and open heart; Challenge perceptions; Artistic excellence; Grow, share, respect. Through our ongoing partnerships, we continue to develop AGSA's approach to continual community consent and achieve direct input from the artists to incorporate their words, language, story and culture when presenting their works of art. *Kungka Kunpu* continues this way of working.

Nici Cumpston OAM, Dr Lisa Slade, Gloria Strzelecki ¹

Kungka Kunpu toured to five venues in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria from 2022 to 2024, assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program and with support from Principal Partner BHP.

The display in *Too Deadly* includes the woven tjampi (grass) sculptures *Paarpakani (Take flight)* and *Tjanpi punu (trees)* as well as a selection of paintings from the touring exhibition.

Kunmanara (Judy) Martin, born Ngatunitja (David Bore), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1963, died Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2022
Ngayuku Mamaku Ngura (My Father's Country), 2021, Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 152.0 × 200.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia
© Kunmanara (Judy) Martin, courtesy of Mimili Maku Artists
photo: Saul Steed



¹ From 'Curators' acknowledgements', *Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2022, p. 119.

A Sky Full of Song

Erin Vink

I can recall two distinct memories when thinking about the sky. The first, a blended, composite memory of a little girl's childhood: sitting in my backyard at night, looking up at the stars. I grew up on Ngunnawal and Ngambri Country in Kamberri, and on hot summer evenings my mother, sister and I would recline together on a hammock chair, stargazing. My mother would point out constellations to my sister and me, and we would trace the stars with our fingers. The second memory begins a few years ago, being camped at Ngurrawanna in the Pilbara region with some of my curatorial peers. We'd spent the night sharing dinner and stories with Yindjibarndi community and Elders and then retreated to our swags. I remember lying awake a long time after retiring. It was freezing cold but it was a clear night, and I spent most of my time staring at the starry sky in awe.

I have come to know that the sky is a realm of story, memory and power, which has long been a source of wonder, knowledge and spirituality for First Nations communities across Australia. It is ageless; it has no beginnings or end. More than a vast expanse, it is something shared that exists across Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, a sentient entity of sorts directly connected to Country, which acts as a repository for our ancestral stories. The sky is also a mirror of ongoing earthly experiences and a record of the ongoing significance of our traditions.

The sky offers infinite space to celebrate both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's shared connections, and sometimes the unique singularity of our stories. Across Indigenous communities globally, we often romanticise the sky at night – when it is full of stars, undefinable and all-knowing. Yet the wisdom we draw from the stars profoundly shapes our understanding of the day as well. The duality of the sky is essential to consider when looking at First Nations artists who weave the cosmos into their visual storytelling.

The Sky as Story

The Pleiades star cluster has been known to artists across the globe since antiquity. The cluster appears in Greek mythology as the seven daughters of the Titan Atlas and Pleione, pursued by Orion the hunter and transformed into stars by Zeus, who aided their escape. They have been mentioned by Homer in *The Odyssey*, several times by the writer Hesiod in his *Works and Days*, and by tragedian Aeschylus in his play *Agamemnon*. In Hesiod's epic 700 BCE treatise, he lays the groundwork for how the stars can dictate seasons of harvest and renewal. He notes: 'When Atlas's daughters rise, the Pleiades, start harvesting, plough at their setting. These are hidden forty days and forty nights. But as the year goes round, once more their lights appear, and then it's time to hone iron tools.'

In Aboriginal culture, the Pleiades are also one of the most enduring sky-based narratives, presented in the form of a songline – the Seven Sisters. In the far north of Australia, the Yolŋu understand the Pleiades as seven sisters who go hunting for food, and Orion as brothers who are fishing in a canoe. In the central and southern desert regions, the Anangu songline recounts the relentless pursuit of the sisters by the antihero Nyiru. This tale is recounted in *Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters*, 2016, a monumental three-metre by five-metre collaborative painting by twenty-four female artists working through art centres across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.



Badger Bates, Barkandji people, New South Wales, born Wilcannia, New South Wales, 1947
Emu sky, 2008, Broken Hill, New South Wales
linocut on paper, 43.1 × 70.9 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Badger Bates

Freda Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1961

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1925, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021

Angkaliya Eadie Curtis, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Miti, South Australia 1928

Tjangili Tjapukula George, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 1950

Sandra Goodwin, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born near Mimili, South Australia 1969

Beryl Nyuniwa Jimmy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Fregon, South Australia 1970, died 2022

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Atila (Mount Conner), Northern Territory 1949, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2023

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Watarru, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944

Sylvia Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1965

Tjungkara Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1969

Manyitjanu Lennon, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born outbush north of Watarru, South Australia 1940

Betty Muffler, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born near Watarru, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1944

Matjangka Nyukana Norris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Victory Downs Station, Northern Territory 1956

Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Rocket Bore, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2025

Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born near Perentie Bore, South Australia 1963

Antjala Tjayangka Robin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Apu Ininti, South Australia 1941

Alison Munti Riley, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 1966

Kunmanara Stanley, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Wingellina, Western Australia 1938, died Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 2020

Carlene Thompson, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 1950

Maringka Tunkin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mulga Park, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, Northern Territory 1959

Puna Yanima, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born De Rose Hill Station, South Australia 1955

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1956

Jeanne Wallatina, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Indulkana, South Australia 1976

Judy Wallatina, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Indulkana, South Australia 1981

Kungkarangkalpa – Seven sisters
2016, Fregon, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 300.0 x 500.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artists, courtesy of the APY Art Centre Collective





Tjunkaya Tapaya, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Antalya, Northern Territory 1947
Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters), 2020, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory
 stoneware, white slip, black slip, 50.5 x 16.0 x 17.5 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
 Art Gallery of Australia, Adelaide
 © the artist, courtesy Ernabella Arts

Depending on their proximity in time and space, these stories vary across cultures, yet it is clear in Australia's history that the cosmic tale is not only a lesson about survival and kinship, but also one about how to use the land. In *Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters*, the canvas becomes a vibrant map with pulsating fields of patterning, celestial blues and warm reds, demonstrating where the sisters travelled to find solace. The artists effectively weave the sky and the earth together without boundaries, reinforcing the deep relationship between celestial movements and cultural identity to impart this story for future generations. As Kunmanara (Nyrupaya) Kaika Burton described the work:

the benefit of the story goes further than this. This is a story about ... women looking after each other, and working together to stay safe ... Women aren't facing the dangers of Wati Nyiru today in Alice Springs or Adelaide but they are surrounded by dangers and challenges.²

Burton's words are a salient reminder that the tangible components of *Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters* exist to share the intangible: that this is a map gifted to young Anangu by kungka kunpu (strong women) to one day be understood and used to teach. This is identity and First Nations knowledge preserved for those who will keep culture strong through the holding of tjukurpa.

The Pleiades and the Orion constellation are also central to two other major presentations by Tjunkaya Tapaya OAM and the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. Both works take a different approach to expressing the sky's influence, incorporating celestial storytelling into the very fibres of everyday life. In the Tjanpi Desert Weavers' *Paarpakani (Take flight)*, 2011, Orion – embodied as Wati Nyiru – is depicted astride the sculptural form of a bird woven from tjanpi (grass), symbolising movement and transformation. In Tapaya's several works called *Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters)*, 2020, the artist etches figurative representations of the sisters' tale into clay.

I consider *Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters)* a major body of work that represents a critical contribution to the documentation of the Seven Sisters narrative, blending distinctive gestural mark-making with Pitjantjatjara annotations. Employing the sgraffito technique, Tapaya's vessels carry a raw, tactile quality, which reflects the artist's hand and her material engagement with Country.

Tapaya's work is particularly significant in expanding the epistemological framework through which the Pleiades and Orion are understood. Traditionally transmitted through oral storytelling, the Seven Sisters narrative finds an alternative mode of inscription in her annotated ceramics. In doing so, her work positions Indigenous written records within the broader realm of accounts of the Pleiades, challenging the privileging of Western archival and non-oral traditions, while also affirming the enduring presence and transmission of Indigenous knowledges.



Tjunkaya Tapaya, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Antalya, Northern Territory 1947
 Rene Kulitja, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia/Northern Territory, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1958
Paarpakani (Take flight), 2011, near Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
 raffia, minnarri grass, wool, poly-raffia, yarn, wipiya (emu feathers), felted wool, wire, 125.0 x 40.0 x 220.0 cm
 Gift of Margaret Bennett, Vivienne Bolaffi, Elizabeth Finnegan OAM, Lipman Karas, Shane Le Plastrier, Sue Tweddell and Ann Vanstone through the Art Gallery of South Australia Collectors Club 2012
 © the artists, courtesy of Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council
 Art Gallery of Australia, Adelaide
 photo: Grant Hancock

The Sky as Pathway

In the large-scale wall installation *Empyrean: A Place and a Path in the Sky and on the Earth*, 2019 (pp. 96–7), Brian Robinson draws our attention to how the sky also operates simultaneously as both a spiritual realm and a navigational tool. This is also in part acknowledged in the previously mentioned works through the movement of the Seven Sisters across Country. In its inaugural display, visitors entering the Art Gallery of South Australia approached Robinson's *Empyrean*, an inverted monochromatic map of the heavens and the earth, adorned with three-dimensional floral elements that outlined an asterism, originally developed from the artist's *bloom* series. Such was the scale of this installation that to gaze upon it was to become an active participant in reading or navigating the scene. Within this expansive composition, the sky revealed Maluyligal and Wuthathi ancestral knowledge as pathways writ large for those who seek direction in a rapidly changing world.

Robinson has frequently referred to the Titan Atlas, father of the Pleiades, underscoring the intersection of classical Greek mythology with Zenadth Kes cosmology. In an earlier work, *Moving with the Rhythm of the Stars*, 2017, Atlas is depicted buckling under the weight of the world, the earth's form tilted to align with the Great Ocean (Pacific) rim. He wears the Mawa mask of the top western Zenadth Kes island of Saibai, reinforcing a syncretic layering of cultural traditions. In *Empyrean*, Robinson expands on this interplay to introduce us to other mask-wearing entities to illustrate the interconnectedness of celestial bodies and how one important star can beget the next. In the upper right of the work, amid swirling clouds, stands the Zugubal – powerful ancestral beings capable of shifting forms and exerting influence from the sky down to the sea. Here, Robinson alludes to the movement of Baidam (the shark), corresponding with the seasonal emergence of the major stars of Ursa Major, visible in the northern sky from mid-October to late November. This moment finds parallel in Greek mythology, wherein the constellation is linked to the nymph Callisto, transformed into a bear by Hera.

Robinson's practice is distinguished by its synthesis of traditional Zenadth Kes storytelling with popular culture influences: characters from *Star Wars* to Astro Boy to Pac-Man emerge to look at constellations, sea creatures and the movement of celestial bodies. Robinson describes the convergence of signs and symbols within his work as a visual Creole language, articulating a complex ontology that bridges ancestral knowledge with contemporary cultural expression.

Today, Torres Strait Islander communities have not only Robinson to thank for the championing of contemporary First Nations celestial navigation charts, but also the celebrated cultural keepers Gail Mabo, James Tylor and Daniel Boyd, to name a few. Where Boyd and Tylor are recognised as contemporary global artists, particularly in relation to the smaller island nations they are also ancestrally connected to, this same recognition has not been extended to the seafaring peoples of Zenadth Kes. This raises a critical question: why does art history's engagement with celestial navigation continue to exclude Torres Strait Islander voyaging collectives from narratives uniting the Great Ocean more broadly?

Gail Mabo with her work *Tagai*, Tarnanthi 2021,
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Sia Duff

pp. 96–7, detail
Brian Robinson, Maluyligal/Wuthathi/Dayak people,
Waiben (Thursday Island), Torres Strait Islands,
Queensland, born Waiben (Thursday Island),
Queensland 1973
Empyrean: A Place and a Path in the Sky and on the Earth,
2019, Cairns, Queensland, mixed media,
dimensions variable
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2020
Art Gallery of Australia, Adelaide
© courtesy of the artist and Mossenson Galleries
photo: Saul Steed





The Sky as Witness

For Yhonnie Scarce, the sky is not merely a place of beauty or guidance, but also a repository of historical and intergenerational trauma. Her installation *Thunder Raining Poison*, 2015, now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, is a powerfully evocative work that recalls the secret British atomic weapons-testing programs that took place on Aboriginal land between 1953 and 1963, particularly in South Australia at a place that has come to be known as Maralinga.

Comprising more than 2000 hand-blown glass yams delicately suspended in a cloud-like formation, *Thunder Raining Poison* offers a striking visual representation of radioactive fallout – a portrayal of clouds of toxic rain moving across Country, contaminating land and poisoning its traditional owners. Within Scarce's practice, the yam often symbolises the dead, appearing in installations that seek to respirit Aboriginal burial grounds or function as acts of memorialisation. The materiality of the glass itself holds deep significance: not only does it allude to the extreme heat caused by bomb blasts at Maralinga that melted the desert sand into a glass-encrusted surface, but it also links Scarce's work to a lineage of glassblowers and makers who, since antiquity, have looked up at the sky not just with wonder but awareness.

In an interview with the artist in 2021, I asked Scarce why it was important that she give form to the puyu, or poisonous mist. She reflected:

I think initially I was trying to create a visual representation from memory from the stories that I had heard firsthand ... so that [audiences] could get a sense of what was coming towards those people who were out on Country when the testing took place.³

Thunder Raining Poison achieves precisely this. The installation demands an intimate engagement: as viewers approach, the work gradually reveals its insidious implications, much like the classified nature of Operations Buffalo (1956) and Antler (1957), which slowly came to public attention, long after the dust from the bombs had settled.

Personally, I am struck by the uniqueness of Scarce's visual language when I view this work. The significance of this is twofold. First, Scarce's work underscores the ways in which contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic practice is informed by intergenerational experiences and embodied knowledge, acknowledging that the sky has long been witness to and a bearer of destruction. Second, her fragile, hand-blown glass yams serve as a physical testament to the atrocities wrought on the Maralinga Tjarutja, Kokatha, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara peoples. While much of Australia remains wilfully ignorant of this part of our history, the lived experiences transmitted to Scarce through the accounts given by Elders are as vital to historical consciousness as any written record regarding the sky.

The Sky as Season

Across each of these diverse artistic expressions, I have seen the sky emerge as more than just a visual spectacle. It has evidenced itself as being a sentient entity, a cultural archive, a source of knowledge, and a place for remembrance. It is also inherently seasonal. The Seven Sisters narratives are abundant with references to ritual and harvest, Brian Robinson's work engages with the sky as a means of determining safe conditions for voyage and fishing, and Yhonnie Scarce's installation mirrors how seasonal rains, typically associated with fertility and regeneration, were transformed into carriers of contamination. It is perhaps Teho Ropeyarn's *Ayarra (Rainy Season)*, 2021, that most explicitly unites these perspectives, urging a deeper consideration of the sky's role in shaping the rhythms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life.

Yhonnie Scarce, Kokatha/Nukunu people, South Australia, born Woomera, South Australia 1973
Thunder Raining Poison, 2015, Adelaide
glass, wire, metal armature, dimensions variable
Purchased 2016. This acquisition has been supported by Susan Armitage in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
© Courtesy of the artist + This Is No Fantasy
photo: Saul Steed



Ropeyarn is an artist with cultural connections across Zenadth Kes and northern Queensland. *Ayarra (Rainy Season)* (pp. 102–3), a print created from multiple carved lino blocks, reveals the cyclical relationship between water and the land, particularly the cycles of monsoons, where the sky is an active force that sustains and challenges those who live beneath it. While *Ayarra (Rainy Season)* was originally made for Tarnanthi in 2021, a separate edition of the work was included in the *23rd Biennale of Sydney: rīvus* (2022). Reflecting on the conceptual framework for this display, Ropeyarn stated:

Injinoo (and all Aboriginal people) are at one with the land, sea and sky. We traverse the physical, the natural and the spiritual realms. My work ... is a visual depiction of this philosophy – explaining how the land becomes the human, the human becomes the animal, the animal becomes the land, the land becomes the spirit, and the spirit becomes a device linking these elements. The land will only listen to its people.⁴

To understand Ropeyarn's practice as contouring and recounting the sky's seasons is to see a colour palette inherent across his prints, deliberately focused on a contemporary embodiment of First Nations understandings of knowing and relating. The upper portion of *Ayarra (Rainy Season)*, composed of hundreds of eddying black and grey forms, depicts water bodies and rain patterns, while the land below, an ellipsis of fruiting and flowering wet-season plants in warm red, appears to be fluid and slowly moving. The deliberate absence of colour in the sky not only aligns with the stylistic traditions of Zenadth Kes printmakers but also serves as a meditation on the power of bla(c)k First Nations bodies, invoking both historical narratives and socio-political contexts. The rich earth red, reminiscent of ochre that comes directly from Country, further situates the work within longstanding understandings of cultural knowledge.

It is imperative to see Ropeyarn's work within a broader practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic production, one that extends to the APY Women's Collective, the Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Tjunkaya Tapaya, Brian Robinson and Yhonnie Scarce, so its straddling of time, space and art histories can be made clear. Across these practices, I am struck by the ways in which inherited and embodied narratives of the sky manifest in visual form, enacting genealogical practices that are not only preserved through orature but are also reinforced through ceremonial and political engagement. Notwithstanding their deeply emotional and politically potent nature, these works exemplify a living, breathing and continuously evolving visual culture. In this way, we come to understand that the sky is not a distant or abstract realm but an ever-present participant in daily existence, guiding agriculture, movement and ceremony, which continues to shape the experiences of Indigenous communities across Australia and the Great Ocean more broadly.

1 Hesiod, *Works and days*, translated by A.E. Stallings, Penguin Classics Australia, 2018, p. 54.

2 Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Tjunkaya Tapaya & Hannah Kothe, 'Kungkarangkaipa: Seven Sisters', in *Tarnanthi 2017* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2017, p. 36.

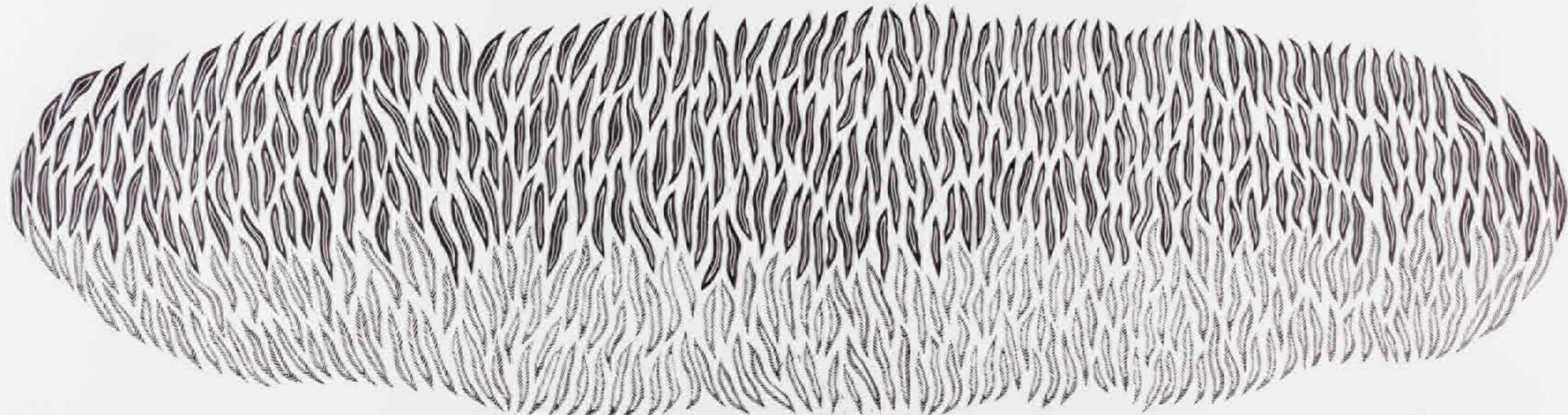
3 Yhonnie Scarce, interview with the author, 8 February 2021.

4 Teho Ropeyarn, artist statement, Biennale of Sydney, <https://www.biennaleofsydney.art/participants/teho-ropeyarn/>, accessed March 2025.



Rebecca Selleck, born Canberra 1986
James Tylor, Kurna people, South Australia/ Te Arawa,
New Zealand, born Latje Latje/Barkindji Country
(Mildura, Victoria) 1986
Pardu Tarralyi (Butcher block), 2022, Canberra
blue gum timber, cast bronze, animal fat,
80.0 × 40.0 × 40.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported
by BHP 2022
© James Tylor and Rebecca Selleck
photo: Stewart Adams

pp. 102–3:
Teho Ropeyarn, Angkamuthi/Yadhaykana people, Northern
Cape York, Queensland, born Mount Isa, Queensland 1988
Ayarra (Rainy Season), 2021, Cairns, Queensland
vinyl-cut printed red and black inks on paper, edition 1/5,
154.0 × 227.0 cm (sheet)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Courtesy of the artist and Onespace Gallery
photos: Joe Ruckli



Ali Cobby Eckermann

a whisper arrives. two thousand. two thousand or more. did you hear it?
that bomb, the torture of red turning green, the anguish of munda (earth) turning to glass
did you hear it? two thousand. two thousand or more yams burnt useless inside the ground
poison trapped in glass like a coffin, like a museum. did you hear it?
two thousand. two thousand years or more. can't go away. you poisoned it good!
two thousand. two thousand or more
tears we cried for our Land, for the fear you gave us, for the sickness and the dying.
two thousand years of memory here, two thousand or more
peaceful place this place, happy place till you come with your bombs.
you stole our happiness with your toxic ways.
you stole our stories. two thousand. two thousand or more.
animals can't live here, there's so much dying.
my heart can't live here, there's too much crying.
two thousand, two thousand or more. our people gone missing. did you hear it?
where's my tjamu? you seen him? where's my daughter? you seen her?
mummy, you seen my mum? dad!
two thousand. two thousand times or more. I ask for truth. Do You know where they are?
silence sits here. two thousand. two thousand or more.
trees dead with their arms to the sky. all the birds missing. no bird song here. just silence,
like a funeral. two thousand. two thousand or more.
a whisper arrives. did you hear it? two thousand. two thousand or more.
might be spirit come together. did you hear it? might be our hearts.
it sounds like glass. our hearts breaking.
but we are stronger than that. we always rise us mob.
two thousand. two thousand or more.
you can't break us. we not glass. we're people.
two thousand. two thousand or more. our spirit comes together. we make a heart.
did you see it? the fragments. it's there in the glass.
our heart grows there as we mourn for our Land.
it's part of us. we love it. poison and all.

In *Thunder Raining Poison*, 2015, Yhonnie Scarce starts an important and overdue dialogue with the past. This is her traditional country, where stories were shared under a vast sky, through dance and pantomime. Chapters of story were sung in unison, recited over and over. The songlines of these ancient stories crisscrossed this land, uniting Aboriginal people in a varied yet shared history of place. Family, culture and story are our greatest possessions. If you look closely at *Thunder Raining Poison* you will see the energy of a moment halted in time. Our Land has been poisoned and it is our cultural duty to tell our truths through our art.

If you listen with compassion you may hear the sorrows of our old people caught in the glass. In some locations the furnace of the atomic bomb testing was so extreme the red sand was turned to glass. In other locations the bomb craters radiated heat for days. Our old people, in their innocence, slept in the craters for warmth at night; their bodies found dead in the mornings.

This epic installation *Thunder Raining Poison* offers a sensitivity beyond the bombs. If you linger nearby with a true sense of empathy and understanding, you will see a heart. A heart that reflects her love of Country. Our hearts still mourn for our land. We will not forget the horror and the hurt.

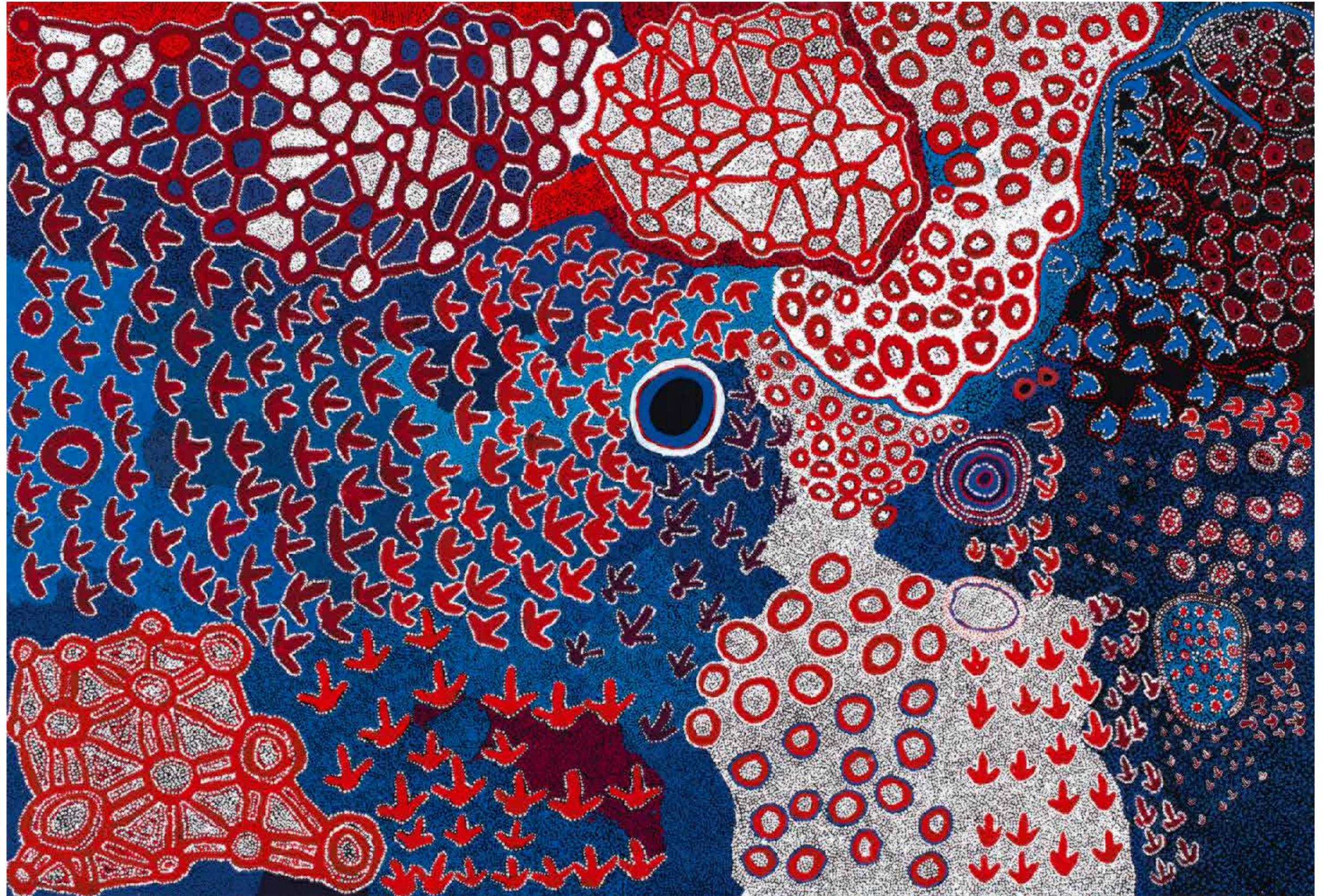
Prior to the nuclear testing the regional area of Maralinga was linked by a long waterholes route that allowed a major trade route for Aboriginal people. Ceremonial activity was essential, and the maintaining of kinship networks required frequent travel. Cultural hospitality and respect was vital for the success of these exchanges, and was predetermined by centuries of practice. This area was an important consulate within a large embassy and welcoming to all who entered with dignity and heart. Yhonnie continues this exchange in her art, with her intelligence and strength as a Kokatha artist.

Today one question remains. In a land that remains crisscrossed by Aboriginal ways I ask the audience – what did you bring to share with us (Aboriginal people) today?

This poem on p. 104 was written in 2016 as a response to the glass installation by Kokatha/Nukunu woman Yhonnie Scarce, *Thunder Raining Poison*, and was published in *Artlink* under that name. My mother and her siblings were born at Ooldea, so the atomic tests at Maralinga had a direct impact on my family.



detail: Yhonnie Scarce, Kokatha/Nukunu people, South Australia, born Woomera, South Australia 1973
Thunder Raining Poison, 2015, Adelaide
glass, wire, metal armature, dimensions variable
Purchased 2016. This acquisition has been supported by Susan Armitage in recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
© Courtesy of the artist + This Is No Fantasy
photo: Saul Steed



Byron Brooks, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia 1951
 Kunmanara (Fred) Grant, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Ukatjatjara, Western Australia 1943, died Western Australia 2022
 Simon Hogan, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Paltju, Western Australia c.1930
 Kunmanara (Lawrence) Pennington, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Uurlu, Western Australia c.1934, died Kaltjiti (Fregon), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2024
 Patju Presley, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Itaratjara, Western Australia 1945
 Ian Rictor, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Artulin/Tuwan, Western Australia c.1955
 Kunmanara (Roy) Underwood, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Tjutajara area, Western Australia 1937, died Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia 2018
 Lennard Walker, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia, born Tjukaltjara, Western Australia c.1946

Ilkurika, 2015, Ilkurika, Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia
 synthetic polymer paint on linen, 198.0 x 290.0 cm
 Gift of Barbara Fargher, Roger J. Lang, Lipman Karas, Mark Livesey QC, Joan Lyons, Diana McLaurin, Robert Pontifex and Henry Rischbieth through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2015
 © the artists, courtesy of Spinifex Arts Project
 photo: Saul Steed

Thunder, Lightning and Black Smoke

Claire G. Coleman

Art is dangerous. Art is how we can talk about things that are simply too horrific to contemplate otherwise. With art we can look at things we don't want to see; we can reveal to others things they wish they could hide from.

Art can carry sacred knowledges and be a source of healing for the people – for the land.

The world many Aboriginal people live in is like a horror movie, a body horror, a living nightmare; poison seeping into your veins, invisible, unstoppable, cancerous, fatal, eternal, everywhere and everywhen. When you are Aboriginal your Country is you, it is in your body – it is your body, it is part of you and you are part of it, you carry it with you. And when the poison is in your sacred lands, when your lands will be sick for tens of thousands of years, it is in you for longer than you will be on this planet. When someone nukes your land, the radiation is in your Country, in you, forever. Not just in the spiritual sense; even Western science agrees, when you absorb radiation it works its way deep into your bones and will be there long after you return to the dreaming and your bones to the land.

Country is immortal, it is there everywhen, and so therefore is any eternal poison. And there is no poison more enduring than radioactive fallout, a cancer forever in land and in time itself.

What would you do if someone did that to your homeland – if someone nuked your homeland just to study how the bombs go boom, if someone set off a dirty bomb just to see how far they could spread the forever poison? Because that is what happened to Aboriginal people in the lands around Maralinga.

Perhaps the true power of art is the ability to talk beautifully about ugly things; to find beauty in the world's worst horrors.

Nobody has ever answered 'what is art?' in a way that nobody else would ever question; in a way that includes all things we might call art and excludes all things that we can all agree are not art. When we can't all agree what is art and what is not when we are standing in a gallery (in the simplest sense, something could be defined as art simply because it is hanging in an art gallery), how can we agree in the street, in an art centre, in conversation, in the press, in parliament? If we cannot decide what art is, and some philosophers and art historians argue art cannot even be unambiguously defined, how in hell are we going to decide what constitutes Aboriginal art? It is a question in which the seemingly immovable wall of 'what is art?' meets the racist minefield of 'what is Aboriginal?' and the easily defensible but unpopular conjecture of 'all art by Aboriginal people is Aboriginal art'.

The same could be said of 'political', because it could be argued simultaneously that everything is political and that nothing is.

When writing about Aboriginal political art, we stumble on those two definitions. And we can add to that the myth among the non-expert voices on political art that Aboriginal political art is only done by urban Aboriginal people. Something we should all know to be untrue.

All Aboriginal art is political,¹ because our very existence is political, our survival is political, in a colony that has tried to exterminate us and then erase our culture and even our remains and the archaeological traces of our existence. All art done by Aboriginal people is Aboriginal art.

detail: Yhonnie Scarce, Kokatha/Nukunu people,
South Australia, born Woomera, South Australia 1973
Thunder Raining Poison, 2015, Adelaide
glass, wire, metal armature, dimensions variable
Purchased 2016. This acquisition has been supported
by Susan Armitage in recognition of the
50th Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
© Courtesy of the artist + This Is No Fantasy
photo: Saul Steed



Asserting our connection to Country and telling our stories is claiming our presence; it is a political statement. Therefore we can start from the assumption that, whatever Aboriginal art is, all art by Aboriginal people is political art.

When we think of political Aboriginal art, we are more likely to imagine the works of Girramay, Yidinji and Kuku Yalanji artist Tony Albert, whose works force us to confront how the colony sees Aboriginal people; Kokatha and Nukunu artist Yhonnie Scarce, whose exquisite glass works unpack grief so powerfully; and Ricky Maynard, whose photographs humanise abjected and displaced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These artists grew up in town and their art is overtly and unabashedly political, essentially what we imagine political Aboriginal art to be. However, we have to consider that the art of the late Mumu Mike Williams, particularly his paintings on repurposed mail bags, is also political, overtly so, and he grew up and always lived in Mimili, a community in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in outback South Australia. So too are the artists from the *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* (many spears) project, also in the APY Lands, who use art to revive cultural practices, spear making, that might have otherwise been lost.

Thunder Raining Poison, 2015, by Yhonnie Scarce, first mugged me of my breath at the opening of the very first Tarnanthi Festival, long before I started writing about art. It was impossible to miss, glittering at the bottom of the stairs like a miracle, beautiful beyond words. It is on reading the wall label that its meaning becomes known and breaks your heart. Each glistening piece of glass is a representation of a bush yam, also representing the death of Country and Anangu and other Aboriginal people in the horrific nuclear tests in the north of what is now called South Australia – tests you might be aware of under the name Maralinga, the site of the majority of the tests.

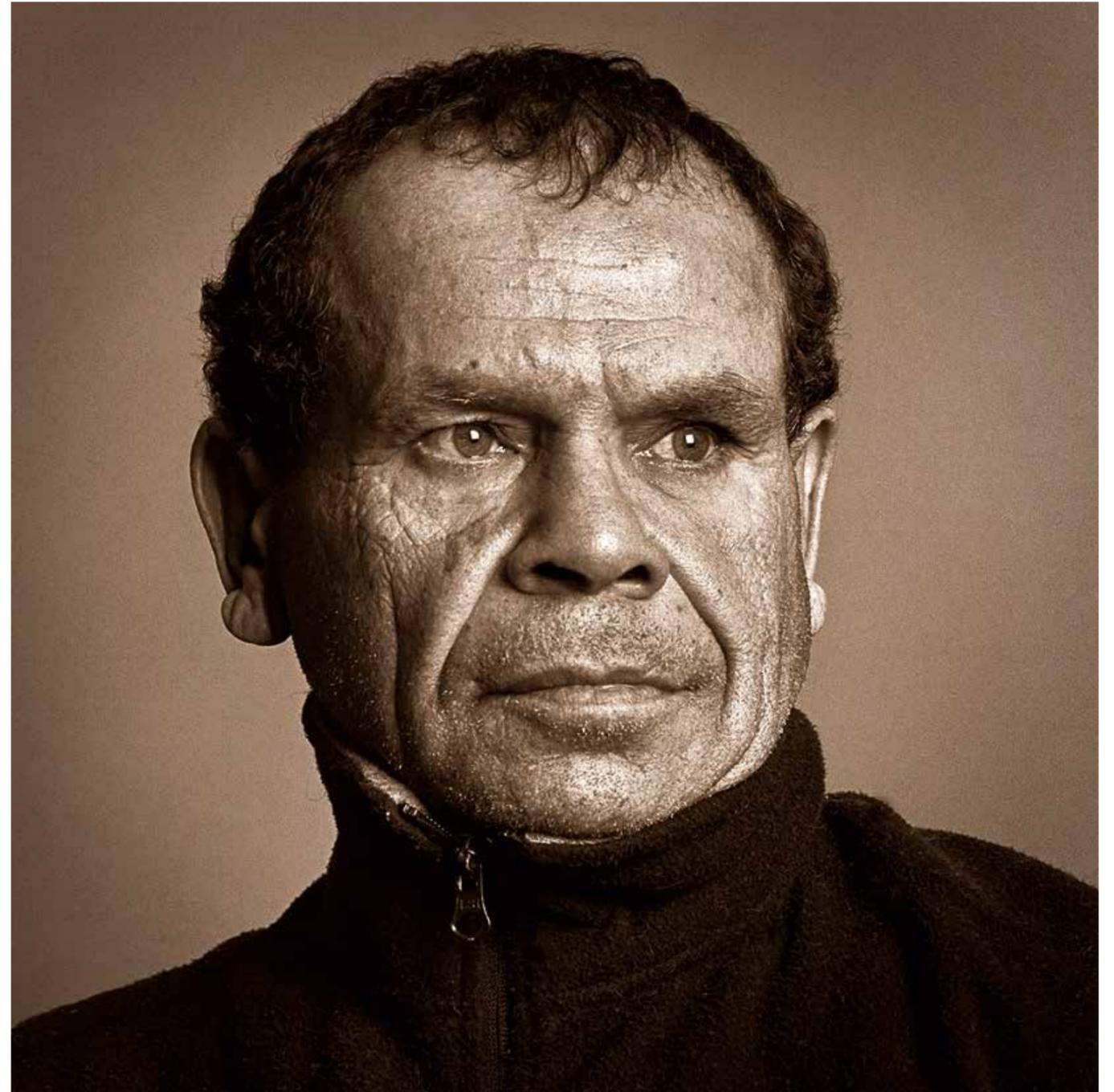
Scarce managed to find sheer beauty in pain, memorialising the burned country, her murdered people, in one of the most powerful works in the history of Australian art – an incredibly beautiful work encasing within it excruciating pain. It was the name and the artist's statements that gave us a clue to the meaning of the work, as is often the case with great art. Without this it would be nothing but beautiful, nothing but, perhaps, one of the most memorable and powerful glass installations ever to be hung in a gallery on this continent.

Scarce is presenting us with the mushroom cloud, raining fallout, throwing death into the sky to travel in the sky Country at the whim of the wind for miles. We see the aftermath, the poison cloud that will drop poisoned rain, which will poison the land for tens of thousands of years. We see the eternal everywhen destruction, the end of the world as the world knows itself and the beginning of a new cancerous future.

The government told us for decades that all Aboriginal people had been moved away from the area before the tests, but the black smoke, the fallout, were remembered by Anangu man Yami Lester, who was blinded by the radiation, whose family died en masse from the black smoke, from the radiation, the fallout and the poisoned water. He said, 'We heard it here, loud and clear, and felt the ground shake. We seen the radiation fallout over our camp.'² There are reports that hundreds, if not thousands, of Aboriginal people have died from the radiation and countless more have had an increased rate of cancer. We may never know the devastating long-term effects of the black mist and the thunder that rained poison.

The moment of those explosions, those Country-killing nuclear blasts, the lightning that preceded the thunder, that threw the black smoke, the forever poison into the sky, is shown in another work that debuted at Tarnanthi a few years later. The APY collaborative installation

Ricky Maynard, Pakana, Lutruwita (Tasmania), born Launceston, Tasmania 1953
Kerry from the series *Saddened Were the Hearts of Many Men*, 2015; printed 2017, Launceston, Cape Barren Island & Flinders Island, Lutruwita (Tasmania) (printed, Sydney) gelatin-silver photograph, 45.0 × 45.0 cm (image)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
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Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa, 2017, an air-burst explosion of spears encasing a light, throws shadows at the walls with force. It's an explosion frozen in time, the spears are vectors of explosive power, the light is the fire, the silent radiation. This is an act of protest. In this work the artists have turned a revival of skills into a statement against the forces that tried to take their culture away, that removed them from sacred land for countless lifetimes, that destroyed their homeland forever, that killed their families. Each spear is thrown at the heart of that Country and the hearts of the people; the spears are death as much as they are a revival of endangered culture.

You are forced to face what has been done, the destruction of the land and the people. The spears are pointed at you the moment you enter the room, like they have been pointed at Aboriginal people since colonisation began.

A spear is a weapon as much as a nuclear bomb is, but a spear can only kill one person at a time. Nuclear weapons are as indiscriminate as weapons get, and their ability to cause harm is intergenerational, is eternal. We are reminded of this in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's famous poem *No More Boomerang* (1966), with the lines 'Lay down the woomera, lay down the waddy, now we got atom bomb, end everybody'. We are also reminded that when the British and Australian governments collaborated on a missile program, firing missiles over Country and displacing people from their homelands, they named the place Woomera, using a Dharug word from the Sydney area rather than a local Aboriginal word. It was a place from which to throw spears at the sky.

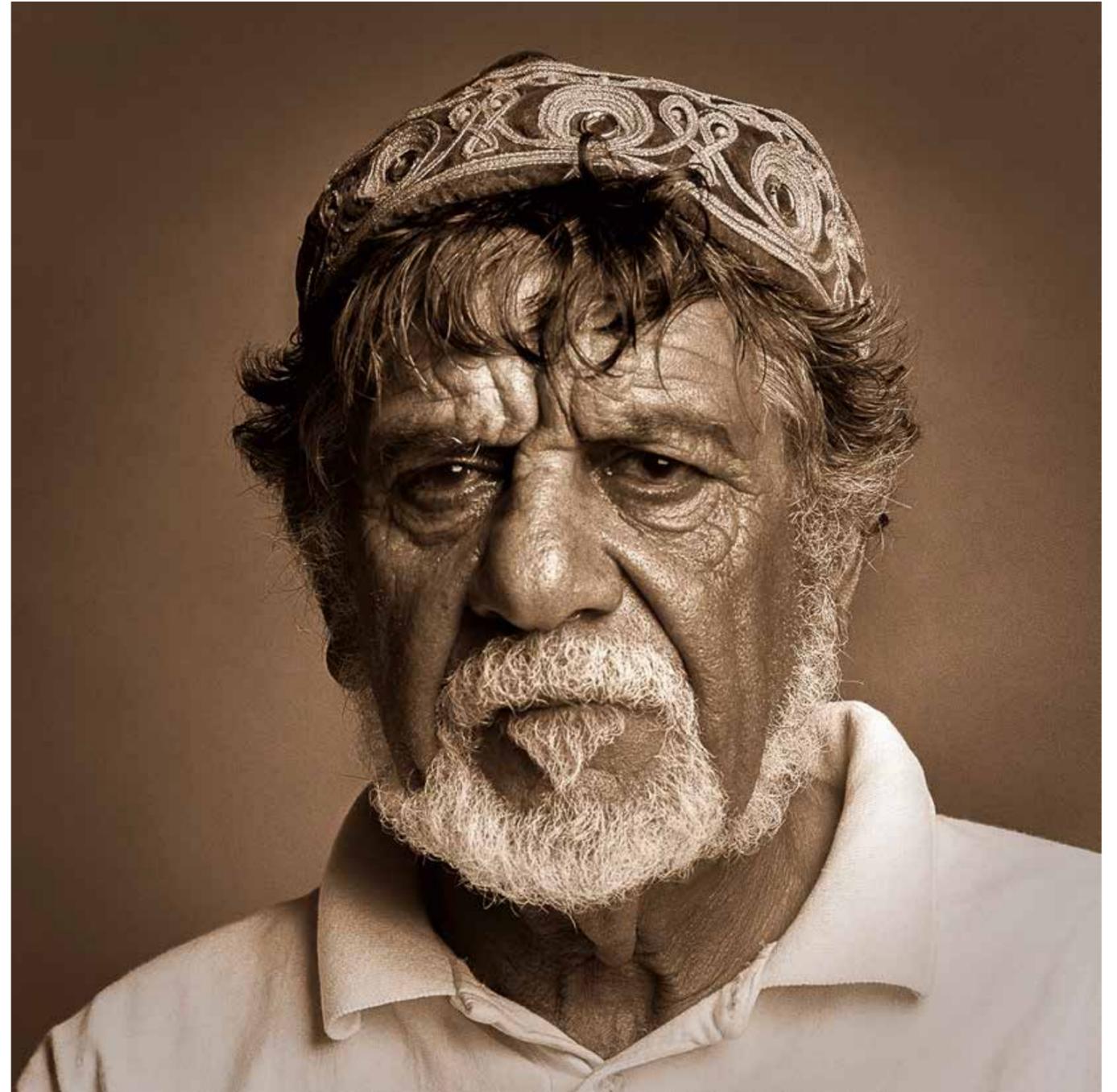
The spears could almost be aimed at the boys in Tony Albert's *We can be heroes*, a suite of photos created in 2013 of young Aboriginal men with targets on their chests. The spears could be aimed at the targets that show how mainstream Australian culture views young Aboriginal men, as targets for derision if not for actual harm. We are the land and the land is our bodies; if you kill us you kill the land, if you kill the land you kill us.

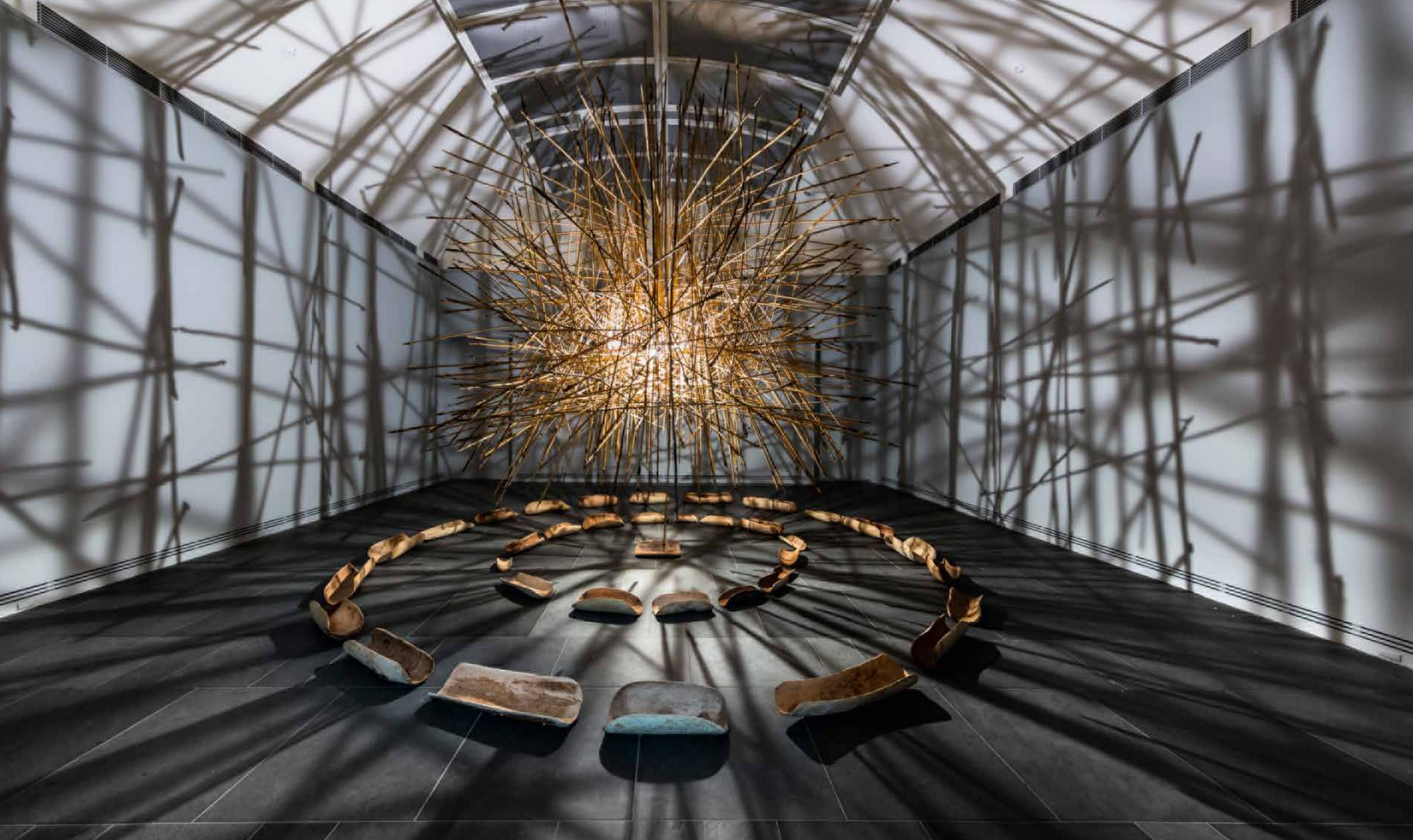
On the other hand, the *Kuḷaṭa Tjuṭa* project is about bringing culture back to young men – the old men, the holders of men's knowledge on the verge of being lost, giving it back to the young men who are in danger of being targeted by the colony. This does not remove the targets from their bodies but might give them the strength to stand and the culture to know what they are standing for. It's an important and encompassing project, containing spears, installations and paintings, connecting to Country and returning lost culture.

The nuclear tests on Aboriginal land, by Britain, were monstrous acts, vectors for death and complete destruction. There are stories, oral histories of people who were not warned or found, who were on their land, as is their right, when the bombs destroyed their homes and killed them too. Yami Lester told stories of the Black Smoke that spread from the tests and killed his people, that destroyed his eyes. By intent or not, the bombs were not just tested, they had a target and that target was Aboriginal people and Aboriginal land.

This is a nightmare scenario in which you are the lumbering monster, the beast (or its handmaiden), the destroyer of worlds. If you are Australian and anything other than First Nations, you did this, because the system of colonisation by which you benefit did this for you. I don't want you to take the benefits from colonisation and not face the costs – not paid by you. If you benefited from colonisation, you must also accept the harm you did. If you live here and are not First Nations, everything you have was built on Aboriginal land. You gained the benefits so you bear the cost.

Ricky Maynard, Pakana, Lutruwita (Tasmania), born Launceston, Tasmania 1953
Ronnie from the series *Saddened Were the Hearts of Many Men*, 2015; printed 2017, Launceston, Cape Barren Island & Flinders Island, Lutruwita (Tasmania) (printed, Sydney)
gelatin-silver photograph, 45.0 × 45.0 cm (image)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
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Country mourns its people while people mourn their Country. People who have never been there, people who do not love that place, who have no connections there, have destroyed it in such a way it will not be the same for thousands of years – if it ever recovers. But they forget the Everywhen, forget that what they call the future when they are gone, when the land is healed, is the same as the past before they came, before the thunder and the black smoke.

Did you know the fallout from Maralinga went as far as Adelaide,³ even as far as Sydney – but only a little bit, it can be assumed, although more than the modelling expected – and covered a lot of the continent. Even you might have Maralinga radiation, forever poison from British bombs, in your bones. The thunder rained poison on the place where Tarnanthi is held, where these works of art hang. There might be fallout from those tests in the dust on the art, in the water of the river, on your skin, on this page. On your fingers, in your lungs. And what should bother you is that there is no benefit to anyone on this continent, any of the poisoned people, because we have no nuclear program, no nuclear bombs (and nor should we). You poisoned the land, yourself, your descendants forever for Britain.

I would be bothered about that if I was you, even if it was not your sacred Country that was melted to glass, not your home that was murdered, which will never be the same again. It is a reasonable question to ask why Britain didn't test nukes on their own land. And the answer, every answer anyone can think of, comes down to imperialism and colonialism – as do most bad things that happen on this continent. The land they nuked was simply not important to them because it was not theirs, because the British people didn't live there, and they could imagine it as useless, as empty. Nuclear testing and colonisation are different heads on the same lumbering beast.

Maybe the fact that you might be breathing the fallout, that it might be giving you cancer, is enough to finally make you angry about this.

To the people of the APY Lands, the damage to Country is eternal, and this has damaged their culture, as has their removal, forever, from their lands.

Australia is an active genocide, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is protest art – whether overt, a scream into the void left by destruction of culture, or more subtle, asserting our presence, our survival of a genocide. It was not enough to commit genocide; the colony also committed countrycide, wounding Country itself to the point that it may never recover, and sometimes it feels like the colony is not ready to reckon with that. First Nations people are resilient but we need our homelands for the strength Country gives.

The nuclear program on Aboriginal land was an unforgivable crime, one you must reckon with.

You might have thought of political art by Aboriginal people as something that comes from the city but you are wrong. It belongs to Aboriginal people because our survival itself is political.

1 Claire G. Coleman, 'All Aboriginal art is political art', in Kylie Neagle (ed.), *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the Classroom 2*, AGSA, Adelaide, 2023, pp. 268–70.

2 'Maralinga', Australian Museum website, 20 June 2023, <https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/unfinished-business/unfinished-business-maralinga/>, accessed April 2025.

3 'Nuclear bomb tests at Maralinga triggered Hedley Marston to study fallout over Australia', *ABC News*, 10 August 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-10/hedley-marston-maralinga-nuclear-bomb-tests-and-fallout/101310032>, accessed April 2025.

Tony Albert, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji people, Queensland, born Townsville, Queensland 1981
We can be heroes, 2013, Sydney
 twenty pigment prints on paper, 124.0 × 115.0 cm (overall)
 28.5 × 19.0 cm (sight, each sheet)
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2014
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Courtesy the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf
 photo: Greg Piper



illustrated on pp. 114–15

Alec Baker, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Shirley Well, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1932

Eric Mungi Kunmanara Barney, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1973

Freda Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1961

Moses Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1993

Michael Bruno, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia/Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1994

Angela Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1966

Cisco Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born near Irruntju (Wingellina), South Australia 1963

Kunmanara (Hector) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born near Pipalyatjara, South Australia 1937, died Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2017

Noel Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1994

Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja people, South Australia/Northern Territory, born Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory 1950, died Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021

Kunmanara (Taylor) Wanyima Cooper, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Malara, a waterhole east of Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1940, died 2024

Kunmanara (Ngilan) Dodd, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Antara (Sandy Bore), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1946, died Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2023

Sammy Dodd, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Winpiranganyi, South Australia 1946

Jimmy Donegan, Ngaanyatjarra people, Western Australia/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Yapan near Ngatuntjarra bore, Western Australia 1940, died Mutijulu, Northern Territory 2022

Maureen Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1966

Kunmanara (Ronnie) Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Umbeera, Northern Territory 1949, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2017

Kunmanara Stanley Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Kulgera, Northern Territory 1944

Arnie Frank, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Yanyarinyi (Kenmore Park), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1960

Witjiti George, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Lambina/Granite Downs Station, South Australia 1938

Kunmanara (Gordon) Ingkatji, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Titu, South Australia c.1930, died Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2016

Adrian Intjalki, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1943

Mr Jack, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1951, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2025

Kunmanara (Willy) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born near Irrunytju (Wingellina), Western Australia 1941, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs) 2020

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Atila (Mount Conner), Northern Territory 1949, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2023

Naomi Kantjuriny, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Victory Downs, South Australia 1944

Kunmanara (Brenton) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Willi Willi, southwest of Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1951

Freddy Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1951

Kunmanara (Ray) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Amaruna, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1940, died Mutitjulu, Northern Territory 2018

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Watarru, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944

Graham Kulyuru, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Kunyjanu, South Australia 1939

Kunmanara (Willy Muntjantji) Martin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 1950, died Kulgera, Northern Territory 2018

Errol Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia 1965

Kevin Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1984

Mark Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1975

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Kaltjiti (Fregon), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1946, died Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021

Vincent Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1983

Kunmanara (Tiger) Palpatja, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Piltati, South Australia c.1920, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2012

Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Rocket Bore, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1944, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2025

Kunmanara (David) Pearson, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1964, died 2025

Kunmanara (Jimmy) Pompey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Gap Well, South Australia 1952, died Port Augusta, South Australia 2018

Aaron Riley, Walpiri people, Northern Territory, born Ali Curung, Northern Territory 1974

Adrian Riley, Walpiri people, Northern Territory, born west of Ali Curung, Northern Territory 1961

William Tjapaltjarri Sandy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Tanu Well, South Australia 1951

Priscilla Singer, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Port Augusta, South Australia 1968

Keith Stevens, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Granite Downs Station, South Australia 1940

Lydon Stevens, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Cundeelee, Western Australia 1967

Bernard Tjalkuri, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Waltja rockhole, South Australia c.1930

Lyndon Tjangala, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1994

Mr Wangin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia c.1939

Ginger Wikilyiri, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Kunumata, South Australia 1930

Mick Wikilyiri, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Rocket Bore, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands, Northern Territory 1938

Mumu Mike Williams, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Inturjanu between Kenmore Park and Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1952, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2019

Anwar Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1994

Carol Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1972

Frank Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born near Artuti, South Australia 1949

Kamurin Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1994

Marcus Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1998

Roma Young, Ngaanyatjarra people, Western Australia/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Warburton, Western Australia 1952

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1956

Kulata Tjuta

2017, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

wood, spinifex resin, kangaroo tendon, plus six-channel DVD with sound, dimensions variable

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

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photo: Saul Steed

p. 119: **Mumu Mike Williams**, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Inturjanu between Kenmore Park and Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1952, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2019

Sammy Dodd, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born in Winpiranganyi, South Australia 1946

Tjukurpa Kunpu Mulapa, 2016, Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas mail bags; wood, spinifex resin and kangaroo tendon

121.5 × 75 cm; 123.0 × 73.0 cm; 123 × 2.2 × 2.3 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

© Estate of Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams/Sammy Dodd, courtesy of Mimili Maku Artists

photo: Saul Steed



Blue and Red

Ellen van Neerven

(Deep) Blue

Responding to Judy Watson's *string over water (alkurri kingkarri wanami)* and *spine and teeth (mundirri banga mayi)*

I dissolve pigment in water ... I dance on water, I splash water around ... I'm constantly in and out of water when I'm making work ... Waanyi people — our cultural language group — are known as running water people and I know that I think very deeply in water.

Judy Watson¹

Water reflects the love in our bodies
it takes feeling to be present in this flow
dancing on water, running on air
we can bridge the silences
the rushing sound makes me feel home.
I hold shells in my hand
to overtake numbness: I list smoke as hope:
tenderness as water
Aunty and Mum by the fence
collecting odd things
using what they could out of scrap
to build us a home
the materialism of work
if my grandmother kept a scrapbook, what would be in it?

Blue is the colour of memory, Judy says. The colour of water and sky. Here is past and paper through colour. She uses blue to symbolise the strength and resilience of her Waanyi people.

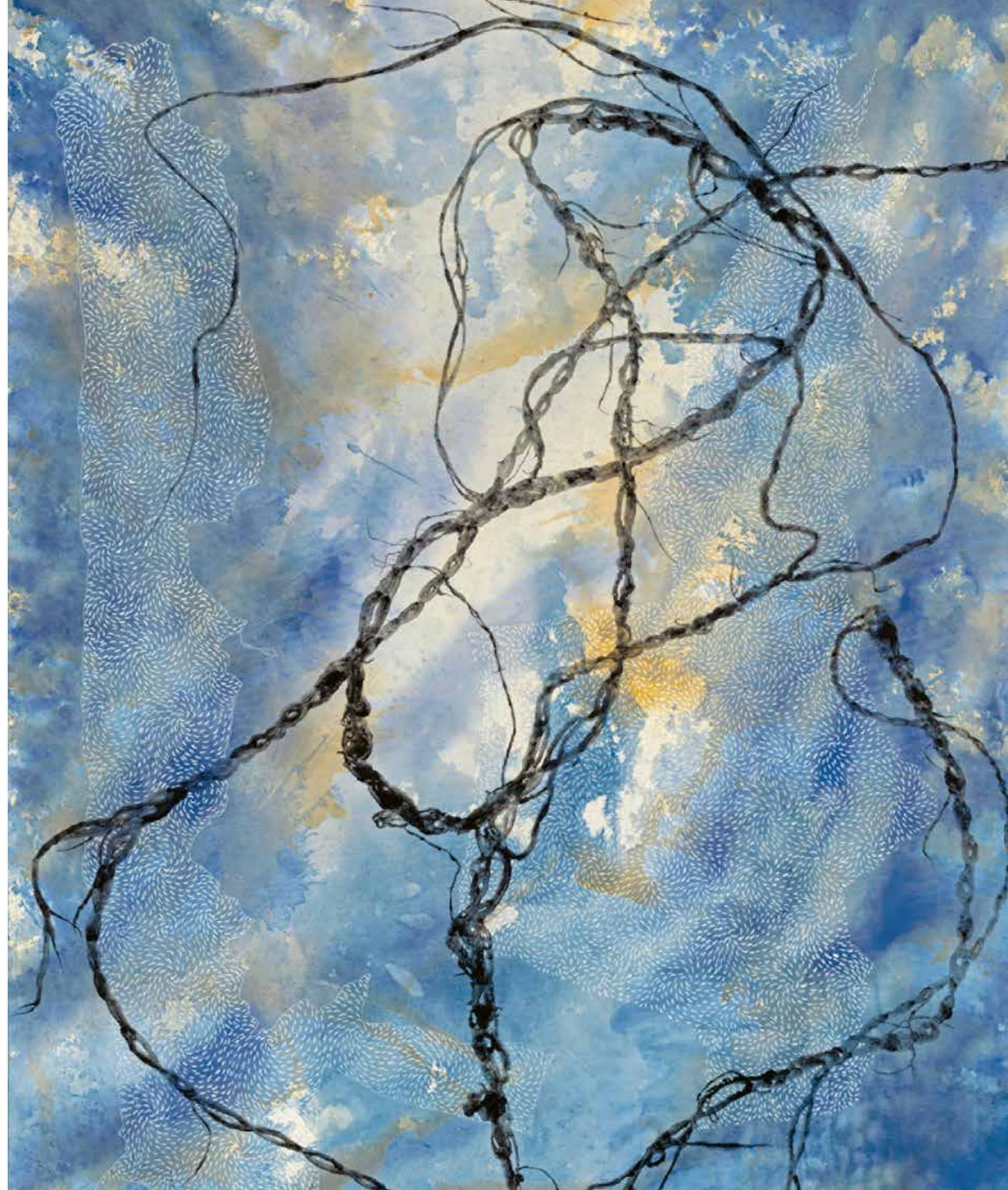
My Bornean friend says he starts every relationship with the ceremonial gifting of Maggie Nelson's *Blueets*, an intensely cerebral deep dive into the colour blue and the author's obsession, referencing famous figures of the Western world, including Joni Mitchell, Billie Holiday, Leonard Cohen and Andy Warhol.

I find my brain absorbs soft blues or blue-greys or green-blues better than most colours (see Autism-Friendly-Design palette by GA Architects). These colours make me calm and I wear them to shroud myself in softness, like a cloud, like the things I want to be surrounded by.

I walk in the misty Sarawak highlands with my grey-blue T-shirt designed by Maureen Nampijinpa O'Keefe for Arid Lands Environment Centre, which says 'A drop of water is precious in the desert'. I am speaking to Kelabit Elders about beads and blue. I think about how blue is significant to many cultures, how it is often highly valued.

There is a new Kelabit dictionary and I flick through the pages. I am hearing the Elders' desperation to hold onto language and teach the new generation who only learn English and Malay at school. The Elders dream for the words to lift off the page and surround us in this mountain air. I remember back at home listening to Keerray Woorroong language custodian

detail: Judy Watson, Waanyi people, Queensland, born Mundubbera, Queensland 1959
string over water (alkurri kingkarri wanami), 2019, Brisbane
synthetic polymer paint, graphite, pastel, watercolour pencil on canvas, 261.0 x 180.5 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane
photo: Carl Warner



Dr Vicki Couzens tell us forty-three per cent of the world's languages are endangered; this is overwhelming. She said that some estimate that half of all languages could become extinct within the next fifty years and asked why the whole world wasn't in uproar about this.

If, like me, you wake up with no explanation, just a colour, keep looking for the answers in Country. Just keep going. You are not trapped. I want to tell you that rivers can be how we can glance at ourselves. This colour reflects back at you, a flow, a movement, an important source of life.

For us, blue has protective and healing qualities. On my flight back I write in blue on my hands. I gaze below and see how materials and Country create their own marks. I think of the complexity of water and how it responds to what is around it. I am fascinated by how water can flow, trickle or race.

'Waanyi people are known as "running water people" because of the inherent quality of the water in their country,' Judy Watson says.² But the health of the water must not be taken for granted and culture involves taking an active role in protecting waterways.

Alexis Wright says Waanyi people believe that 'if you tamper with the sacred Boulgi healing water or pollute it, or not care for it, Boodjamulla (Rainbow Serpent) will leave and take the water with him'.³ We can't survive without water, our most precious resource and source of life. For First Nations people worldwide, water sovereignty is crucial to our cultural and spiritual wellbeing and resilience.

My mum told me to pick something up and learn. She made the string. We sat and interlocked arms like a chain, inviting intimacy, to love, record our survival, let the truth seep into our pores. Me with sweaty fingers – coated in the oil of home, tea tree, kangaroo, emu, native ginger and macadamia. I could not hold anything. I told Mum.

I want this to be a making place like it used to be
I want to start co-creating shadows in bed
play with shelter and light
I want to feel documented by my body
drawn to a movement in the corner of my eye
 water in the air
 the moisture
 what creeps in
tidal thoughts like the wet and dry, the dissolve and carry
in water I am connecting. Underwater we are listening.

Dr Vicki Couzens says 'as water is the lifeblood of Country, language is the lifeblood to our spirit'.⁴ Māori say it takes one generation to lose a language and three generations to restore. Judy keeps language close to her work. It's like a gathering which involves her relatives, like her mother, her sister and her son.

Mum says 'Come home now, the kettle's whistling. Your family will warm you up.' When I was younger I wanted to possess as much knowledge as I could. I didn't want to come back until I could be able to speak warmly to Mum and Aunty in my language. I want to not just feel the word list on my lips but have a conversation, to be able to say how my day was and how I want to love. I can't do this. But they tell me to wash my shame off in the cool of our headwaters and come inside. I know now that I'm older that knowledge can't be possessed. It can only be held and shared, like a relative.

detail: Judy Watson, Waanyi people, Queensland, born Mundubbera, Queensland 1959
spine and teeth (mundirri banga mayi), 2019, Brisbane
synthetic polymer paint, graphite on canvas,
262.5 × 181.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane
photo: Carl Warner



Our hearts of freshwater. It's nearly time to arrive at the river mouth. We are rushing sand at the feet of trees and grubs in our hands. Weaving the best of ourselves into a water carrier.

Slowly braving the unknown but not too much. I am embodying matrilineal links like carrying my mother's string across water.

She tells me not to give up on the dream of hearing fluency roll off my tongue and others around me things will take time

I will need to listen bluely and deeply even deeper, even bluer than before

(Deep) Red

Responding to Reko Rennie's *OA_RR*

A blackfella behind the wheel of a car
is a modern wayfinder in a sea of stars

Driving the trails of the ancestors
singing up home

A blackfella behind the wheel of a car
is a rugged time traveller

Seeped in nostalgia
with Charlie Pride on the radio

Being on Country makes me feel agile
a weight immediately leaves my body

Deep. Red. Blak.
my mob take our name from the soil and it resembles us

We are the burnt earth people
our spirits and identities rise from what is underneath

Volcanic dust is in my blood, my veins
I come from here

Being away from Country makes me lonely
a similar structure of abandonment

I'm not alone here
my connection is grounded by the earth

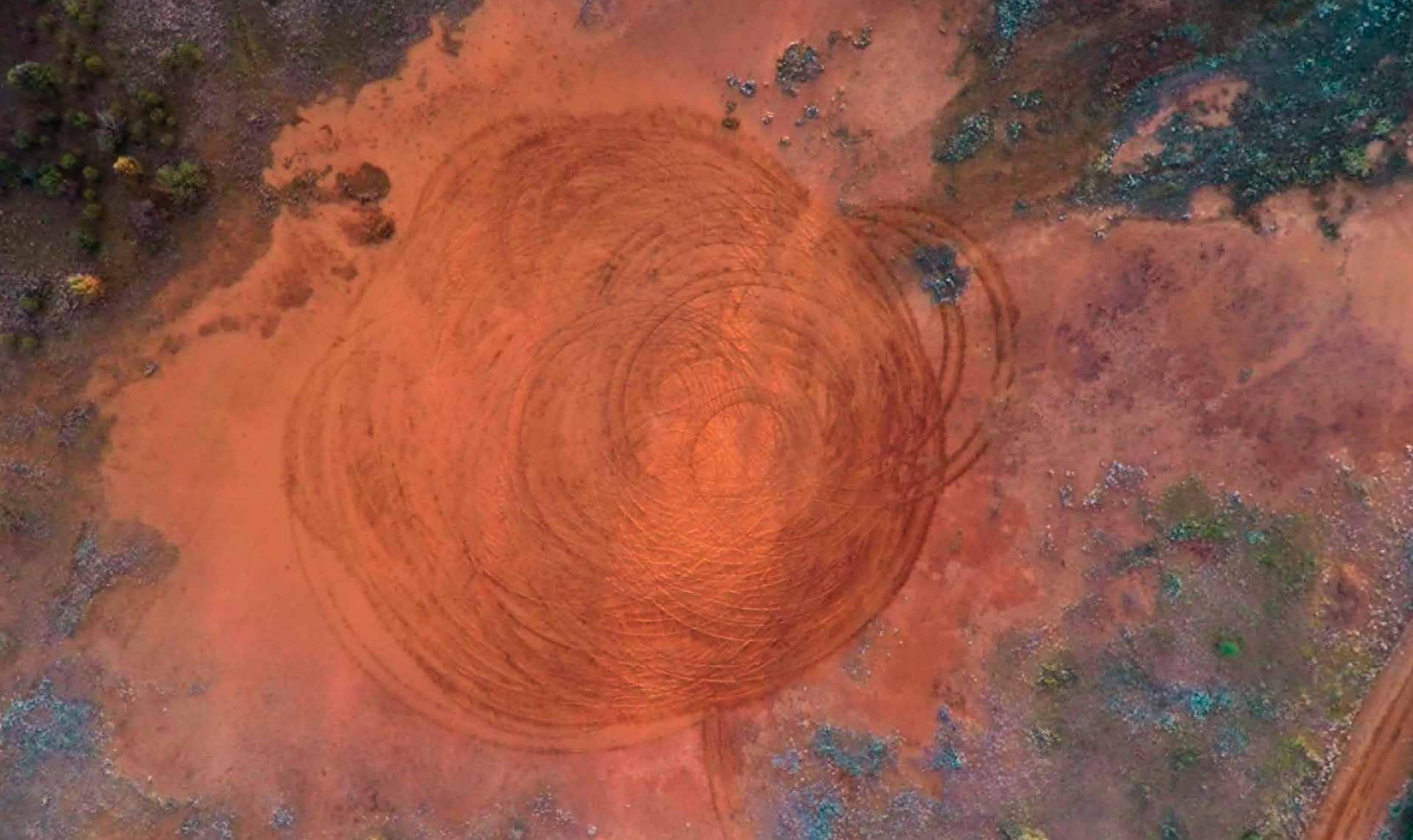
When I get angry at the latest news online, I call my mother on speaker phone. Mum said every site is sacred and it hasn't stopped them before. No permission asked. The damage ongoing. Don't get too attached to outrage, she's saying. You'll run yourself down. Centre yourself. Just come home.

Now that I'm back on Country, I feel whole. Is it too clichéd to say this? I don't care. There's a sudden togetherness I feel, as if I did not know until I got here how much the world wills me broken. I am defiant in the face of colonialism and the perpetuating myth and stereotype. I am outside their version of me. I am myself.

Music takes the edge off this drive. I have a road-trip playlist to last us one thousand years.

Reko Rennie, Kamilaroi/Gamilaroi/Gamilaraay people,
New South Wales, born Melbourne 1974
OA_RR, 2016–17, Walgett, New South Wales
4K three-channel digital video, PAL, stereo sound,
7 minutes, 47 seconds
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2017
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Reko Rennie
photo: Justin McManus





Channelling every blackfella who drives roads
their ancestors walked
travelling where we once moved freely
and where we once were restricted to stations
and missions
and homesteads
eagle gliding
guiding us from above
ancestral tracks on
car bonnets
bush flowers
red sand
Watch us engrave Country while we drive
our spirit is patterned in the earth
nothing can take the tears out
they are stained here into the sacred soil
where I found us blazing like a poem
the deepest red is Blak



- 1 'Judy Watson interview', IKON Gallery, 20 March 2020, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrbz5Si6Abs>, accessed May 2025.
- 2 'Judy Watson', *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2007, p. 167.
- 3 Alexis Wright, 'A journey in writing place', *Meanjin*, winter 2019, <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/a-journey-in-writing-place/>, accessed May 2025.
- 4 Vicki Couzens, 'River of language', Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Museums Victoria website, <https://museumsvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka/about-us/birrarung-gallery/river-of-language/>, accessed May 2025.
- 5 Reko Rennie in Kerrie O'Brien, 'I come from the street, it shaped who I am', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August 2021, <https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/i-come-from-the-street-it-shaped-who-i-am-reko-rennie-20210524-p57urq.html>, accessed May 2025.

Freja Carmichael

Flowing across distances, merging with other systems and returning to Country, waters are continuously adapting and connecting. The ways that water moves with time and place reflect how story and cultural practices are shaped and transformed by generations' experiences, learnings, and the culture and kinships of today.¹ The interwoven threads between time, waters and culture come together in the cultural and creative practices of Kalaw Lagaw Ya and Meriam Mir artist Janet Fieldhouse, Liyagawumirr–Garrawurra artists Margaret Rarru Garrawurra and Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra, Ngarrindjeri artist Yvonne Koolmatie and Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung artist Maree Clarke. These artists' work expresses and exists within their commitments to the responsibilities of their cultural inheritances, including Country, waters, story and the life worlds they connect.

For more than twenty years, artist Janet Fieldhouse, based in Gimuy (Cairns), has been creating hand-built ceramics to share the stories and practices of her Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage. Drawing from her research into cultural and Ancestral forms of Torres Strait Islander people through museum collections, as well as the stories that have been handed down to her, Fieldhouse has created an array of baskets, bowls, pendants, scarification forms, fishhooks, and sea-travel sails and vessels in abstract and harmonious shapes. As Fieldhouse explains:

My work is an expression of my Torres Strait Islander heritage: the material culture, rituals of social and religious life, and artefacts which are created to fulfil the functional and spiritual needs of the peoples of the Torres Straits.²

In recent years, Fieldhouse's ceramic forms have evolved into bodily shaped figures, which story the practices of rituals and charms. In Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands), cultural charms have been carved, shaped and created in varying sizes and materials, including stone, wood, clay and other substances. The cultural and creative variations of these forms align with the meaning they can hold, from personal, ceremonial and religious significance to functions such as protection and seasonal hunting, intertwining with deep connections to seas and salt water.³ For Fieldhouse, the intention behind her cultural charm forms is to bring forward a positive and good presence, while upholding the histories of these practices.

For *Little Sister (Charm)*, 2023, Fieldhouse has shaped the earth materials of textured buff raku clay to create a medium-sized non-gendered shape. The accentuated body shape is adorned with an intricately woven pendant that references cultural practices in weaving which interlink with times of ceremony, celebration and community. Fieldhouse's approach of merging ceramics with weaving and adornments of feathers and shells is her way of layering stories in their deeper cultural and community meanings. This is her creative purpose: to evoke cultural stories and forms by reshaping and aligning with what it means to be a Torres Strait Islander woman today.⁴

Janet Fieldhouse, Kalaw Lagaw Ya/Meriam Mir people, Torres Strait Islands, Queensland, born Cairns, Queensland 1971
Little Sister (Charm), 2023, Cairns, Queensland
buff raku trachyte clay, raffia, wire, 76.0 × 37.0 × 22.0 cm
Edward Minton Newman Bequest Fund 2024
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Janet Fieldhouse, courtesy of Vivien Anderson Gallery





Sisters Margaret Rarru Garrawurra and Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra also carry and continue the importance of belonging that stretches to the Ancestral past. Living on their island homes of Langarra (Howard Island) and Yurrwi (Milingimbi), off the coast of Arnhem Land, the artists grew up learning the law, story and cultural understandings given to them by their Ancestral creator spirits, the Djan'kawu Sisters, who travelled across saltwater and freshwater Country. Ganalmirriwuy has explained this story with family, saying:

As they travel, they make the country and give the people their knowledge, their language, Law and ceremony. Each time they stop, they change their name and their language. Every clan knows a different story and many call the Two Sisters by different names. Djan'kawu is the Garrawurra name.⁵

In a series of woven forms and paintings, Rarru Garrawurra and Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra represent their Liyagawumirr-Garrawurra cultural identity. Their collection of woven mindirr (dilly bags) includes use of red, white and yellow pigments related to knowledge revealed by Ancestral creator beings. The ochre pigments are layered and painted onto the tightly woven bags in designs and patterns that originate from body markings applied during important ceremony. Through their cultural authority, the artists also continue their ceremonial body paint designs on barks, hollow logs and paper, with lineal and geometric designs alongside their creative approach to composition and detail.

The cultural and ceremonial knowledge that converges with law and kinship is also carried in Rarru Garrawurra and Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra's weavings with pandanus. Rarru is recognised for her distinctive mol (black) pandanus baskets, dyed from local plants using a recipe that she has developed and finessed through experimentation and an intimate understanding of her immediate environment, including plant sources and seasonal activity.⁶ Rarru shares her knowledge and learnings of the charcoal-black tone with Ganalmirriwuy, who also creates the distinctive monochrome weavings.⁷ Rarru and Ganalmirriwuy work as a family and intergenerationally to teach and sustain their cultural legacies and identities as senior Yolŋu weavers and artists renowned across Country and waters.

Margaret Rarru Garrawurra, Liyagawumirr-Garrawurra people, Northern Territory, born Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island), Northern Territory c.1940

p. 134: *Mol mindirr (black conical basket)*, 2020, Yurrwi (Milingimbi), Northern Territory pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), natural dyes, 32.0 x 17.0 x 17.0 cm

p. 135: *Bojuk mindirr (Gamaŋga conical basket)*, 2020, Yurrwi (Milingimbi), Northern Territory pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), natural dyes, 35.0 x 12.0 x 12.0 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Margaret Rarru Garrawurra, courtesy of Milingimbi Art and Culture
photos: Grant Hancock





Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra, Liyagawumirr-Garrawurra people, Northern Territory
born Galiwin'ku (Elcho Island), Northern Territory 1955
p. 136: *Djirrigidi (Garrawurra body paint design)*, 2020, Yurrwi (Milingimbi), Northern Territory
earth pigments on paper, 76.5 × 58.0 cm
photo: Stewart Adams

p. 137: *Djirrigidi miṅḍirr (Garrawurra conical basket)*, 2020, Yurrwi (Milingimbi), Northern Territory
pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), earth pigments, 28.5 × 12.5 × 12.5 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art
supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Helen Ganalmirriwuy, courtesy of Milingimbi Art and Culture
photo: Grant Hancock



Yvonne Koolmatrie is also a leading weaver, who has been pivotal in continuing Ngarrindjeri weaving practices and whose work has spurred greater momentum in regenerating cultural weaving practices. In 1982, Koolmatrie attended a community workshop, where she learnt how to harvest and prepare the aromatic sedge growing in the Riverland region of her Country, and how to coil the fibre using the bundle technique.⁸ Since then, Koolmatrie's practice and life have been inseparable, devoted to the continuance of Ngarrindjeri culture through weaving. Over the years, she has shared her knowledge in workshops and weaving circles. Alongside her direct sharing, her work has also inspired many First Peoples to re-establish/regenerate their unique weaving languages.

Koolmatrie grew up closely connected to the waterways of the Riverland region. These ties are woven into forms inspired by the life, histories and environment of her Ancestors and the forms they created. From her earlier engagements with museum collections, Koolmatrie has regenerated Ancestral forms by weaving eel, fish and yabby traps and baby and burial baskets, while also expanding coil-bundle techniques into imaginative and large-scale sculptural forms.

Koolmatrie's two works called *Eel trap*, 2015, share the resonance of her Country. As examples of storied forms, Koolmatrie's woven traps represent the forms innovatively designed to source food in the river systems in line with seasonal abundance. The considered design meant that only restricted quantities of eels would be gathered as part of maintaining river health through ecological care.⁹ Like the embodied meaning of the trap, the teachings held in Koolmatrie's woven forms are grounded in care for the Country through sustainable harvesting, with sourcing and preparation of sedge aligning with the natural rhythms. Koolmatrie's acts of care and sustainability are part of maintaining the culturally significant weaving traditions of her people.¹⁰ Her woven forms often show no signs of a beginning or end in her coiled approach. This seamless unity offers a reflection on the continuous relationships and responsibilities existing between people, Country, culture, past and present times.

Maree Clarke has also played a central role in regenerating and sharing cultural practices, particularly southeast cultural practices that have experienced interruption through colonial legacies. In an artistic career spanning more than thirty years, Clarke has developed an expansive body of works, including sculptures, installations, photography, video and glass. Across these varying mediums is a continuous thread and story that binds with the past, where she gives deep reverence to Ancestral memory, knowledge and intellectual practices.

Clarke's regenerative approach has included researching and connecting with cultural objects in collection institutions. Through processes of experimentation, adaption and developing materials and techniques, she has transformed her learnings into new tangible forms. One example is her large-scale spirited river reed necklaces, *Black river reeds necklace with galah feathers, waxed thread*, 2019. Clarke explains:



Yvonne Koolmatrie, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia, born Wudinna, South Australia 1944
Eel traps, 2015, Berri, South Australia
woven spiny-headed sedge (*Cyperus gymnocaulos*),
40.0 × 40.0 × 132.0 cm, 47.0 × 41.0 × 121.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2015
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Yvonne Koolmatrie, courtesy of the artist and
Aboriginal & Pacific Art, Sydney
photo: Jenni Carter



Traditionally, river reed necklaces were gifted to people passing through country as a sign of safe passage and friendship. I have been working with river reeds on this sized scale since 2014, making supersized necklaces to talk about the enormous loss of land, language and cultural practices.¹¹

To initiate today's making of river reed necklaces, Clarke became immersed in the wetland ecosystems where the reeds grow, to learn how to harvest and prepare them to create lasting forms. The use of reed materials and techniques applied, and the forms created, evoke memories and experiences of people and place across time.¹² The importance of maintaining these links is embedded in the upscaled size, sharing and asserting the strong presence of culture and connection today.

Clarke's approach to sharing is also demonstrated by her inclusive approach to making. Often, she works collaboratively and intergenerationally, bringing family and community into her processes of creating. These spaces of sharing nurture the values of collectivity in culture and the commitment to passing on knowledge. For Clarke, this is what her practice is about, creating and leaving a legacy for the next generation.

While cultural practices have transformed over time and with present realities, First Peoples artists are showing how the past's meaning, knowledge and spirit remain in new stories, ways of doing and through sharing and teaching.¹³ From the sea-bound ceramic forms shaped by Janet Fieldhouse to the ochre-rich ceremonial paintings and weavings created by Margaret Rarru Garrawurra and Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra, to the stories of the Riverland region woven by Yvonne Koolmatrie and the wetland-scented reeds gathered by Maree Clarke, waterways are points of relating in these works through subtle and direct meaning. Akin to how water is nurturing and represents movement, these artists remind us that making and sharing regenerate and sustain the links between the past and those to come.

- 1 This writing extends my previous research, particularly in connection to the national touring exhibition *long water: fibre stories*, presented by the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2020–22, which considered the spiritual, cultural and physical relationships between water and creative practice.
- 2 Tina Baum, 'Janet Fieldhouse: charmed, I'm sure', *Art Collector*, no. 5, July – September 2023, republished at <https://artcollector.net.au/artist-profile-janet-fieldhouse/>
- 3 Baum, 'Janet Fieldhouse: charmed, I'm sure'.
- 4 Janet Fieldhouse, conversation with the author, 2024.
- 5 Ruth Nalmakarra, Helen Ganalmirriwuy, Mandy Batjula & Rosita Holmes, 'Garrawurra Weavers: Ruth Nalmakarra, Helen Ganalmirriwuy and Mandy Batjula', in Freja Carmichael (ed.), *long water: fibre stories*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2020, pp. 56–7.
- 6 'Margaret Rarru Garrawurra', Milingimbi Art and Culture website, <https://milingimbiart.com/project/margaret-rarru-biography/>, accessed April 2025.
- 7 'Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra', Milingimbi Art and Culture website, <https://milingimbiart.com/project/helen-ganalmirriwuy/>, accessed April 2025.
- 8 Yvonne Koolmatrie, 'This is how I lived', in *Riverland: Yvonne Koolmatrie*, AGSA, Adelaide, 2015, p. 21.
- 9 'Eel trap by Yvonne Koolmatrie', Powerhouse Museum website, <https://collection.powerhouse.com.au/object/134233>, accessed April 2025.
- 10 Kimberley Moulton & Tahjee Moar, 'Yvonne Koolmatrie', in *Defying Empire: 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2017, p. 85.
- 11 'Artist statement: Maree Clarke', Australian Centre for Contemporary Art website, <https://acca.melbourne.net/text/artist-statement-maree-clarke/>, accessed April 2025.
- 12 'Artist statement: Maree Clarke'.
- 13 'Ways of doing' is conceptualised in the scholarship of Noonuccal and Bidjara academic Karen Martin-Booran Mirraoopa, in 'Ways of knowing, being and doing: a theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 76, 2003, pp. 203–14.

Maree Clarke, Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung people, Victoria/New South Wales, born Swan Hill, Victoria 1961
Black river reeds necklace with galah feathers, waxed thread, 2019, Melbourne
 river reed, feathers, waxed thread, 210.0 × 120.0 × 9.0 cm (measurements of work installed)
 Purchased through the Barrie and Jane Vernon-Roberts gift for the development, maintenance and display of the Rhianon Vernon-Roberts Memorial Collection 2021 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Maree Clarke, courtesy Vivien Anderson Gallery
 photo: Grant Hancock



Sophia Sambono

Paper is a deeply loaded medium. Historically it has been used to decree ownership and enact laws and declarations by forces of power. In colonial contexts, particularly in Australia, it was a device to ordain policies that decimated families, communities, Country and culture. The power of paper, however, is not wholly nefarious. Paper is also a compelling tool of communication that imparts knowledge, transports poetry and is a vehicle for storytelling.

Storytelling on paper, through text or imagery, is an ancient and global tradition. For Aboriginal people, however, access to the medium as we know it only occurred from the nineteenth century. Thereafter, First Nations people have wrested the power of paper from their oppressors to create images and narratives of enduring strength, culture and resilience.

One of the first recorded artistic applications was by Tommy McRae (c.1836–1901), a Kwatkwat artist from Victoria, between 1861 and 1864. His ink drawings on paper recorded and celebrated traditional Aboriginal life and culture, presenting First Nation's worldviews and perspectives on colonisation.¹

In the 1880s William Beruk (Barak) (c.1824–1903), a Wurundjeri Elder and artist, created powerful drawings and paintings using watercolours, ochre and pencil. These documented and preserved important stories and aspects of culture and spirituality, in response to the strict controls at Coranderrk Aboriginal reserve, where traditional ceremony and practices were forbidden. Beruk was described as a cultural ambassador, and his art was sold to tourists and collected by international museums.²

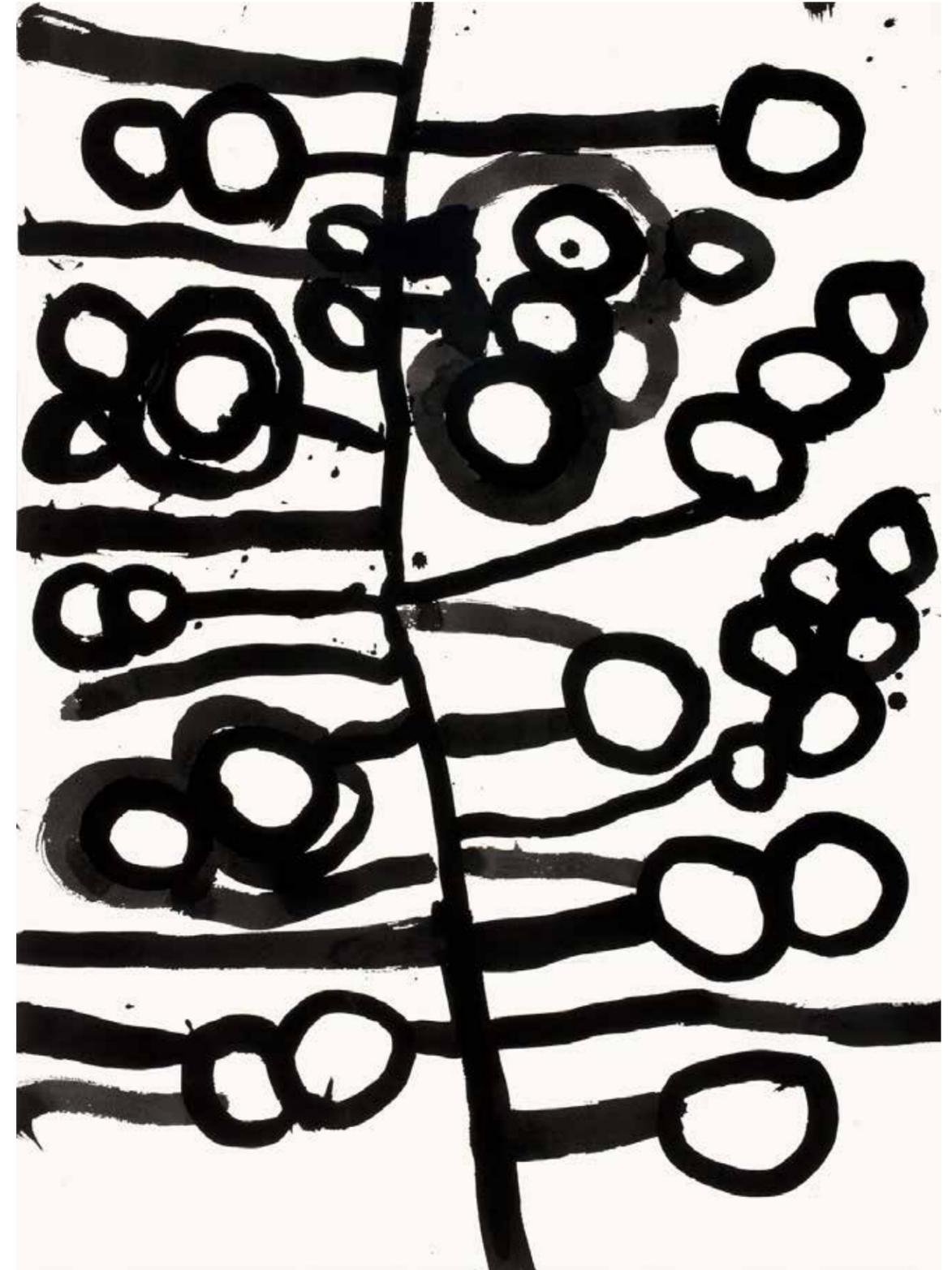
In the 1930s, Western Aranda artist Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) began painting watercolour landscapes on paper, which expressed his deep connection to his Country in an adopted European pictorial style and embodied the sacredness of Tjoritja (West MacDonnell Ranges) Country and ancestral creation stories within it. His success inspired an enduring art movement, which continues today.

In the 1940s and 1950s, artists across Arnhem Land shared their culturally significant stories and diverse artistic styles – traditionally produced on bark – with anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt by using paper and crayon. Now a pillar of the collection of the Berndt Museum at the University of Western Australia, these works have been inducted into the UNESCO Memory of the World register.

From the 1970s paper boomed as an affordable and easily transportable medium for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, particularly for printmaking. Increased access to the medium ushered in a new era of dynamic artistic responses to new technologies. Artists embraced new ways of making art, developing distinctive individual and collective styles across the regions.

Paper itself is a relatively fragile substrate, vulnerable and, at times, ephemeral. Its place in institutional collections is governed by strict conditions that control handling, storage, humidity levels and light exposure. Display periods require subsequent 'rest' time, where works recuperate before the next rare opportunity for viewing. These elements in combination increase the preciousness of these treasured works.

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1925, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021
Ngayuku ngura – My Country, 2020, Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia pigmented ink on paper, 76.0 × 56.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton/Copyright Agency, 2025
photo: Stewart Adams



Returning from rest for the tenth anniversary of Tarnanthi is a dynamic suite of works on paper by Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Iluwanti Ken, Betty Muffler and Marinka Burton, and Tjilpi Kunmanara (Robin) Kankapankatja, which bely the fragility of the medium with images of strength – of culture, Country and memory.

The late Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton (1925–2021) was a senior Pitjantjatjara woman, revered *ngangkari* (traditional healer) and accomplished painter. Born in Pipalyatjara, west of Amata in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in northwest South Australia, her first recollections of contact with non-Aboriginal people were as a child when her family travelled to the Warburton Mission in Western Australia.³

Burton often depicted memories of her youth, particularly of her birthplace and her father's Country near Pipalyatjara, in vivid colourful paintings that represent the landscape and stories embedded within them.

Her works on paper are a departure from her usual exuberant colour-laden paintings. Executed in thick black ink, the monochromatic series *Ngayuku ngura – My Country*, 2020, echoes distinct rhythmic linear designs layered in her painted works. The bold line work entwines across the paper to tell stories of *kampurarpa* (bush tomatoes), interwoven with remembrances from her childhood.

Talking about her work for its inclusion in Tarnanthi 2020, she described learning from her *kami* (grandmother) and *ngunytju* (mother) how to collect and process *kampurarpa* as a child.⁴ With great fondness, she recalled enjoying the sweetness of the fruit, and their labour, and sharing the harvest with her family.

Unfolding across the group of works is a multitude of variations on the patterns of the plant, and its connection to Country and story. The contrasting hues of black and white weave facets of her memory and joy from living on Country, learning from her elders. Burton explained:

When I'm drawing this, I'm thinking back to those early days – living on bush tucker, eating and living together, happy, with our families.⁵

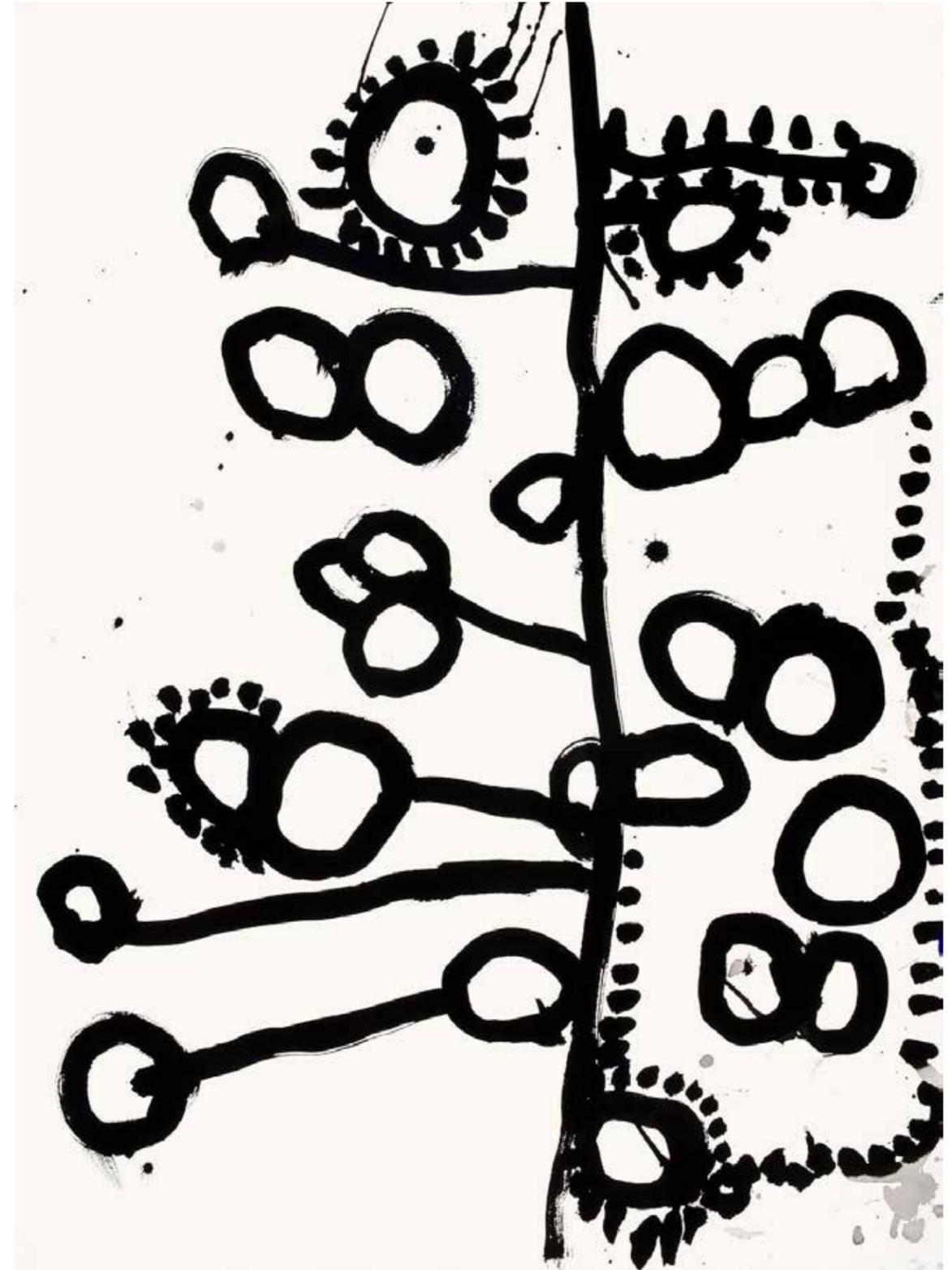
Iluwanti Ken (born 1944) is a senior Pitjantjatjara artist and a highly respected *ngangkari*. Originally from Watarru, she now lives and works in Amata community, on the APY Lands, as an artist at Tjala Arts. A painter and a weaver of colourful *tjanpi* (native grass) sculptures, she is widely recognised for her expressive, and often graphic, ink drawings of *walawulu* (eagles) hunting and caring for their young.

Walawulu ngunytju kukaku ananyi (Mother eagles going hunting), 2020, is a vibrant rendition of the *Walawulu Tjukurpa* (ancestral creation story) inherited from her father. It is brought to life with generous washes of black and white ink, which spread across the fibres of the paper and are layered with finely detailed renderings of eagle feathers drawn with *punu* (wooden) sticks.⁶

In her story of the work, Ken describes how the *walawulu* use their 'crystal clear' piercing vision and hunting precision to catch the *malu* (kangaroo) and feed their young *kuku malu* (kangaroo meat).⁷ She explains the eagle's patience and detailed observance of the *malu* before its capture, an allegory for the many insights Anangu take from the *walawulu*. Anangu women in particular look to the bird for lessons on motherhood, emulating their diligence in protecting, feeding and caring for children.⁸

Narratives of caretaking and protection are embodied throughout Ken's work. She outlines the parental duties of the eagles in the description of her painting, speaking at length about the way they build strong homes (nests) for their offspring and 'cover their children under their wings to keep away the cold'.⁹

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1925, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021
Ngayuku ngura – My Country, 2020, Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia pigmented ink on paper, 76.0 × 56.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton/Copyright Agency, 2025
photo: Stewart Adams





Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia
born Watarru, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands,
South Australia c.1944
*Walawulu ngunytju kukaku ananyi (Mother eagles
going hunting)*, 2020, Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
pigmented ink on paper, 122.0 × 152.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Iluwanti Ken/Copyright Agency, 2025
photo: Grant Hancock

Tjukurpa are not simply creation stories. They contain the essence of spirituality and Anangu way of life, and are 'the force that unites Anangu with each other and the landscape.'¹⁰ This is evident in Ken's work in the expansive layers of cultural experience and knowledge she paints in honour of the walawulu. Reaffirming the central connecting figure, she states, 'See, this is the Eagle's story. Big story, palya (good).'¹¹

Eagles play an important role in ngangkari way of life for Pitjantjatjara artist Betty Muffler (born 1944). She expands on their significance in her works, explaining that 'the eagle is a ngangkari' and often accompanies her in her healing work.¹² She uses fine brush strokes in intricate weaving designs that embody stories of Country and her experience as a ngangkari.

Muffler depicts eagle-eye, aerial views of her Country south of Watarru, in northwest South Australia, across a series of works all titled *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)*, 2020. In one painting, the eagle, her father's 'dreaming', is present, 'sitting in a tree nearby, watching.'¹³ In others she paints the cycle of water, the ngangkari's role in bringing rain and the soakages where the water travels.

For Tarnanthei 2020, Muffler also collaborated with her niece Maringka Burton (born 1950) on two expansive 'really long, big paintings',¹⁴ also titled *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)*, 2020. Like Iluwanti Ken and Kunmanara Burton, the aunty and niece duo are ngangkari practitioners. They work alongside doctors and nurses attending to the wellbeing of Anangu people and their works reflect their close working relationship as family and as healers. Muffler asserts their paintings are 'about healing the sick, our work as ngangkari and the ways the two of us work together as ngangkari. We two women are healers, we have the hands to heal!'¹⁵

Hands that heal together now paint together. Balancing their healing work with their arts practice, the pair paint at Iwantja Arts, an art centre at Indulkana in the APY Lands. Their Country, their places of belonging, are an essential part of their identity and of their work.

Maringka Burton explains of her contribution to the paintings, 'I paint the Country I belong to, Anumara Piti ... where I was born.'¹⁶ In bold, gestural strokes that contrast with Muffler's detailed line work, Burton depicts the Caterpillar Tjukurpa at Anumara Piti, near Wingellina. She paints the network of rockholes created by the Caterpillars, illustrating their connections – where the Caterpillar travelled and the relationships between sites.

Muffler's sections of the collaborative paintings depict the Emu Tjukurpa of her Country at Yalungu, south of Watarru. Emu tracks are scratched onto the paper, following their epic journeys across the land, transforming Country and creating sacred sites in their wake. The footprints are interspersed among the rockhole designs, mapping out where they stopped to drink at a sacred waterhole and make shelter at Yalungu.

Country is a powerful healing force, vital to their ngangkari practice. Muffler and Burton's translations of their Country and tjukurpa imbue the energy of their sacred lands with spiritual dynamism.

The painting is about healing the sick, our work as ngangkari (traditional doctors) and the ways the two of us work together as ngangkari. We two women are healers, we have the hands to heal.

Betty Muffler

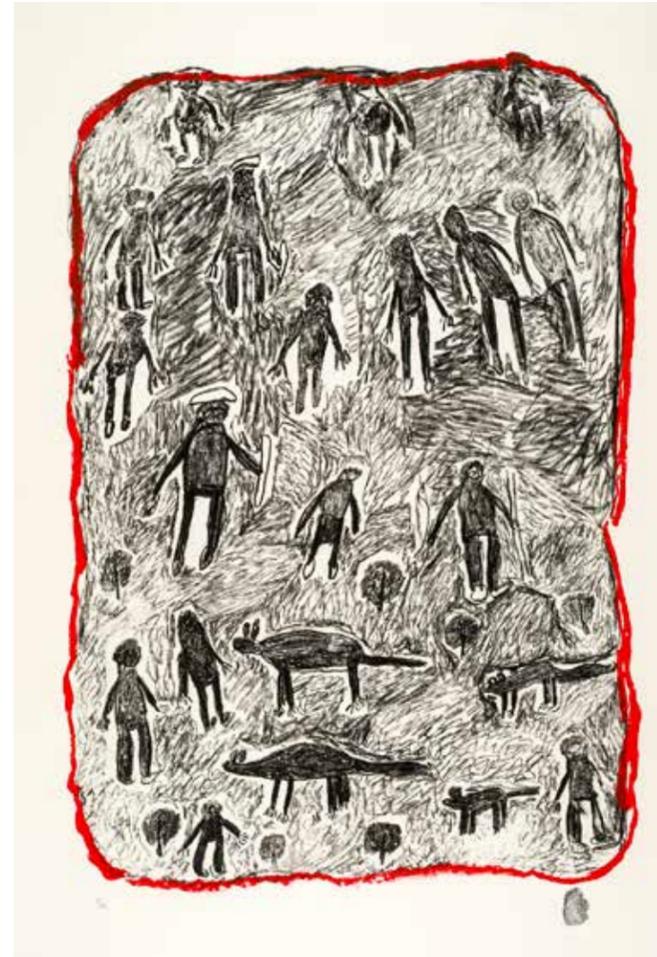
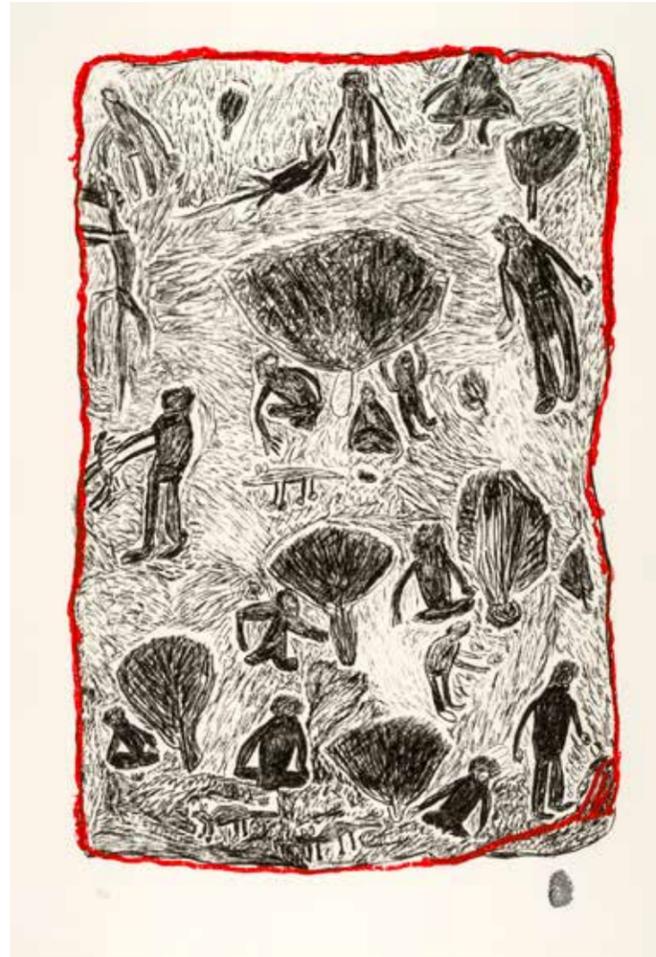


Installation view featuring the work of Betty Muffler and Maringka Burton, *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)*, Tarnanthei 2020, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Saul Steed



Betty Muffler, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born near Watarru, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1944
Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country), 2020, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
pigmented ink on paper, 122.0 x 152.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist, courtesy of Iwantja Arts and Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
photo: Grant Hancock

Betty Muffler



Tjilpi Kunmanara (Robin) Kankapankatja (1930–2012) was a Yankunytjatjara–Pitjantjatjara artist, senior traditional Elder and law man. Born out bush at Walalkara while his family were moving from Makiri to Mimili, Kankapankatja lived a traditional life without European contact until he was a teenager.

These early experiences when travelling along key ancestral routes, walking the tjukurpa and songlines with his family, were a foundation for his deep knowledge of Country and culture, reflected in his art. As his daughter Langaliki Robin explains:

Paluru ninti – Tjilpi Robin knew everything. He grew up travelling by foot from Mimili through to Watarru (250 km of remote desert country). He walked that line that his mother and father walked, travelling back and forth rockhole to rockhole.¹⁷

Throughout his life, Kankapankatja applied his knowledge and experience to caring for Country, ensuring that culturally grounded preservation and maintenance of sacred sites and natural resources were central in the establishment of the Walalkara Indigenous Protected Area.

Tjilpi Kunmanara Kankapankatja, Pitjantjatjara/
Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia,
born Walalkara, South Australia 1930, died 2012

left: *Mungawinki kukaku ankuntja – Early morning going hunting*

right: *Mungartja kukatjara malaku pitjanyi – Afternoon: coming back after hunting*

from the series *Nyangatja nyayuku arairitja – this is my life from long ago*
2012, Kaltjiti (Fregon), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
etching, screenprint on paper, 69.5 × 49.0 cm
Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation's
South Australian Artists Fund 2016
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Tjilpi Kunmanara Kankapankatja, courtesy of Kaltjiti Arts & Crafts
photos: Stewart Adams

Tjilpi Kunmanara Kankapankatja, Pitjantjatjara/
Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia
born Walalkara, South Australia 1930, died 2012

left: *Mungartji Mungantji kukaku patara nyinanyi warungka pauntjangka – Dusk: getting ready to eat before bedtime*

right: *Mungamaringu kunkunaritjaku – Dark Night: everyone goes to sleep*

from the series *Nyangatja nyayuku arairitja – this is my life from long ago*
2012, Kaltjiti (Fregon), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
etching, screenprint on paper, 69.5 × 49.0 cm
Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation's
South Australian Artists Fund 2016
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Tjilpi Kunmanara Kankapankatja, courtesy of Kaltjiti Arts & Crafts
photos: Stewart Adams

As Nguraritja (traditional owner) for country around Walalkara, in the far northwest of South Australia, Kankapankatja's paintings and drawings always represented Walalkara and Iliya. The series of screenprint etchings *Nyangatja nyayuku arairitja – this is my life from long ago*, 2012, was the last group of works completed by Kankapankatja. Diaristic recollections of living on Country, the works chronicle his early journeys from Walalkara to Mimili and Makiri to Iliya.

Across the series the artist reminisces about life in ara iritja (stories from long ago) in pre-contact times. It follows the daily life of a nomadic family group, from morning to night, illustrating his intimate knowledge of the land, animals and plants.

Mungawinki kukaku ankuntja – Early morning: going hunting shows Anangu leaving camp in the morning to look for food and water in rockholes. It is a clear bright day and, among the group, children are already carrying lizards and kangaroo, while a mother watches on with her digging stick and coolamon laden with bush tucker.

In *Mungartja kukatjara malaku pitjanyi – Afternoon: coming back after hunting*, the light has shifted as Anangu sit down at camp. The adults are teaching the children under shady trees, making fire and cooking the food.

Mungartji Mungantji kukaku patara nyinanyi warungka pauntjangka – Dusk: getting ready to eat before bedtime portrays the late afternoon. It is getting darker as the family prepares food before night-time. It is a time of discussion and storytelling with Elders around the camp fire.

The final scene in the series is *Mungamaruringu kunkunaritjaku – Dark Night: everyone goes to sleep*. Now that it is dark, it is time for sleep, while a protective figure watches over the group.

Together these prints offer a glimpse of the traditional life that Kankapankatja experienced as a child and highlight the significance of this foundational time for the artist over the expanse of his life.

Taken together, the works of Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Iluwanti Ken, Betty Muffler and Maringka Burton, and Tjilpi Kunmanara (Robin) Kankapankatja are compelling applications of the historically complex medium of ink and paper. Their creations honour groundbreaking artists working on paper and set monumental precedence for the future. Like paper, in which multitudinal pulp fibres are pressed and merged to form solidity and strength, the sacred stories, cultural knowledge and vibrant memories of the artists are fused in striking compositions that resonate with power and spirituality.

- 1 Judith Ryan, 'Tommy McRae's sketchbooks', *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, no. 42, 2002, republished at <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/tommy-mcraes-sketchbooks-2/>, 2 June 2014.
- 2 'William Barak at work on the drawing *Ceremony at Coranderrk*', National Portrait Gallery website, <https://www.portrait.gov.au/portraits/2000.33/william-barak-at-work-on-the-drawing-ceremony-at-coranderrk>, accessed March 2025.
- 3 Tjala Arts, *Nganampa Kampatjangka Unngu / Beneath the canvas: the lives and stories of the Tjala artists*, Wakefield Press, Mile End, South Australia, 2015, p. 140.
- 4 Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, in 'Iluwanti Ken, Naomi Kantjuriny, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Wawiriya Burton', in *Tarnanthi 2020: Open Hands* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2020, p. 112.
- 5 Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, in 'Iluwanti Ken, Naomi Kantjuriny, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Wawiriya Burton', p. 112.
- 6 Anne Ryan, 'Eagle eye: Iluwanti Ken', *Look* magazine, Art Gallery of New South Wales, February – March 2023, p. 67.
- 7 Iluwanti Ken, in 'Iluwanti Ken, Naomi Kantjuriny, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Wawiriya Burton', p. 96.
- 8 'Walawuru ngunyntju kukaku ananyi (Mother eagles going hunting)', Art Gallery of New South Wales website, <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/76.2022.a-b/#about>, accessed February 2025.
- 9 Ken, in 'Iluwanti Ken, Naomi Kantjuriny, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Wawiriya Burton', p. 96.
- 10 Ryan, 'Eagle eye: Iluwanti Ken', p. 67.
- 11 Ken, in 'Iluwanti Ken, Naomi Kantjuriny, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Wawiriya Burton', p. 96.
- 12 Betty Muffler, in 'Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)', in *Tarnanthi 2020: Open Hands* catalogue, p. 60.
- 13 Muffler, in 'Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)', p. 60.
- 14 Maringka Burton, in 'Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)', p. 50.
- 15 Muffler, in 'Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)', p. 51.
- 16 Maringka Burton, in 'Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)', p. 50.
- 17 Langaliki Robin, Kuntjupai Robin, Ettore Camerlenghi, Luke Ireland & Ellen Ryan-Colton, 'How Dreaming and Indigenous ancestral stories are central to nature conservation: Perspectives from Walakara Indigenous Protected Area, Australia', *Ecological Management & Restoration*, vol. 23, issue S1, January 2022, pp. 43–52.

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pipalyatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia c.1925, died Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021
Ngayuku ngura – My Country, 2020, Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia pigmented ink on paper, 76.0 x 56.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton/Copyright Agency, 2025

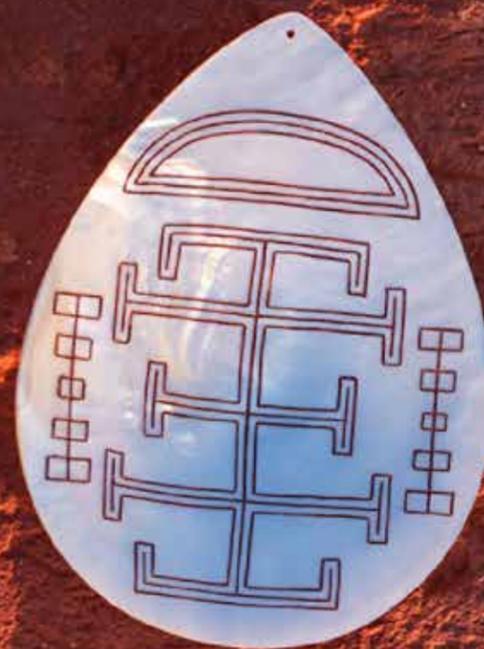




Karen Mills, Balanggarra people, Western Australia
born Katherine, Northern Territory 1960
Untitled: Smoke on Country from the series *Some day we will walk together (on Country)*, 2021, Palmerston, Northern Territory
pigment and synthetic polymer paint on linen,
137.0 × 198.0 cm (irreg.)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Karen Mills, courtesy Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
photo: Fiona Morrison

Beginning with what I am about to say may seem far removed from the Country, the homes and the art of these six artists. Yet, with regard to earth pigment – rock, mineral, clay – or ochre and its wide geological reach, I move in such a way as to start like this: ‘Great artists ... are always imitating the gestures of the first cave artists, soothsayers and healers.’¹ So writes the filmmaker and art historian Manthia Diawara on the work of the American artist David Hammons, who himself has a reputation as a kind of art world soothsayer or ‘shaman’. The point is not that Hammons or great artists must search in vain for the original cave painting that they might mimic it, but that the energy or the spirit carried by the first works of art is either restored, reiterated or devotionally conserved in what they make. In this sense the spirit of the first cave paintings is present in the anoriginal (as opposed to unoriginal) materiality of the art of Angelina Karadada Boona (Wunambul/Worrora people, Western Australia), Karen Mills (Balanggarra people, Western Australia, who lives in the Northern Territory), Mavis Ngallametta (Kugu-Uwanh people, Queensland), Alair Pambegan (Wik-Mungkan people, Queensland), Darrell Sibosado (Bard people, Western Australia) and Garry Sibosado (Bard people, Western Australia), all of whom are dedicated in various ways to using the medium or resonance of the earth in their art.

The work of these six artists is formally disparate and geographically dispersed. Although they are all located across the northern half of the continent, about 4000 kilometres overland separates the artists, from west to east. Three are painters (Karadada Boona, Mills and Ngallametta), while Pambegan paints and makes figurative sculptures, and the Sibosado brothers work separately in riji (the Bard practice of pearl shell engraving) and relief sculpture. Also discrete is the content of their work. Karadada Boona’s *Wandjina Emerging*, 2021, is a series of three gently rendered figurative paintings of a broad-shouldered Wandjina – the creator spirit synonymous with Country and the Ngarinyin, Worrora and Wunambul mob in the Kimberley. Mills’s diptych *Untitled: Smoke on Country*, 2021, is an abstract recollection of the land embedded in memory. *The mouth of Kendall River*, 2015 (p. 161), by Ngallametta is an effervescent depiction of Country, seen from the perspective of a lived relation to the land rather than as a landscape. Pambegan paints the ancestral story *Kalben (Flying fox story place)*, 2014, as a series of red, black and white bands of colour to form a sequence of grids across the canvas. Darrell Sibosado’s *Aalingoon (Rainbow Serpent)*, 2019 (p. 158), is a relief work wrought with corten steel, which rusts as though eliciting its earlier form, iron ore. Garry Sibosado makes riji, such as *Goolalii (storm to the west)*, 2025 (p. 159), with lustrous pearl shells, which he incises and rubs with red ochre in the Bard tradition, creating intricate motifs that refer to approaching storms.



The Sibosado brothers are seemingly at opposite ends of the continuum in their use of earth-derived materials. Darrell works with iron ore but in its commercially sublimated form (steel), only to restore it to the earth as a representation of the ancestral rainbow snake, Aalingoon. In the ancestral story, after Aalingoon arose from the earth, it shed its scales, transforming them into guwan (pearl shell) that scattered among the coastal reefs in Bard Country. Garry Sibosado works with this pearl shell as raw material, shaping it to resemble a dorsal scale, consistent with traditional Bard riji, which are worn by initiated men as ceremonial pubic coverings. The beautiful sheen of the pearl is left exposed, creating an undulating effect. Like the play of sunlight on the ruffled surface of the sea, there is a sense of movement across the engraved red geometric patterns. In this sense, it is as though the form conjures the movement of the storm, which is also indicated by each design. At first glance, the shimmer of the pearl shell is altogether different to the dusty quality of the red ochre. Yet part of the brilliance of the work is the way it subtly directs us to the interaction between elemental forces – the sea caressing red cliffs in the Kimberley or the movement in the sky as a storm travels.

Chalky ochre pigments are typically made by abrading rock, mineral or clay to produce a coloured powder, to which a fixative is then added before it is applied to a surface. Traditionally, natural fixatives, such as wax, yolk, resin and sap, were used in bark painting, whereas today synthetic fixatives, such as PVA glue, are utilised by artists to ensure the longevity of their work. The most common colours are red, white, yellow and black (black can be made using charcoal or manganese) and their various hues. Ngallametta's atmospheric painting *The mouth of Kendall River* is a beautiful display of some of the tonal range in earth pigments. In this work, orange, yellow, green, brown and white all swirl and sway together, giving the viewer a sense of the ebbing movement and force of the river Country.

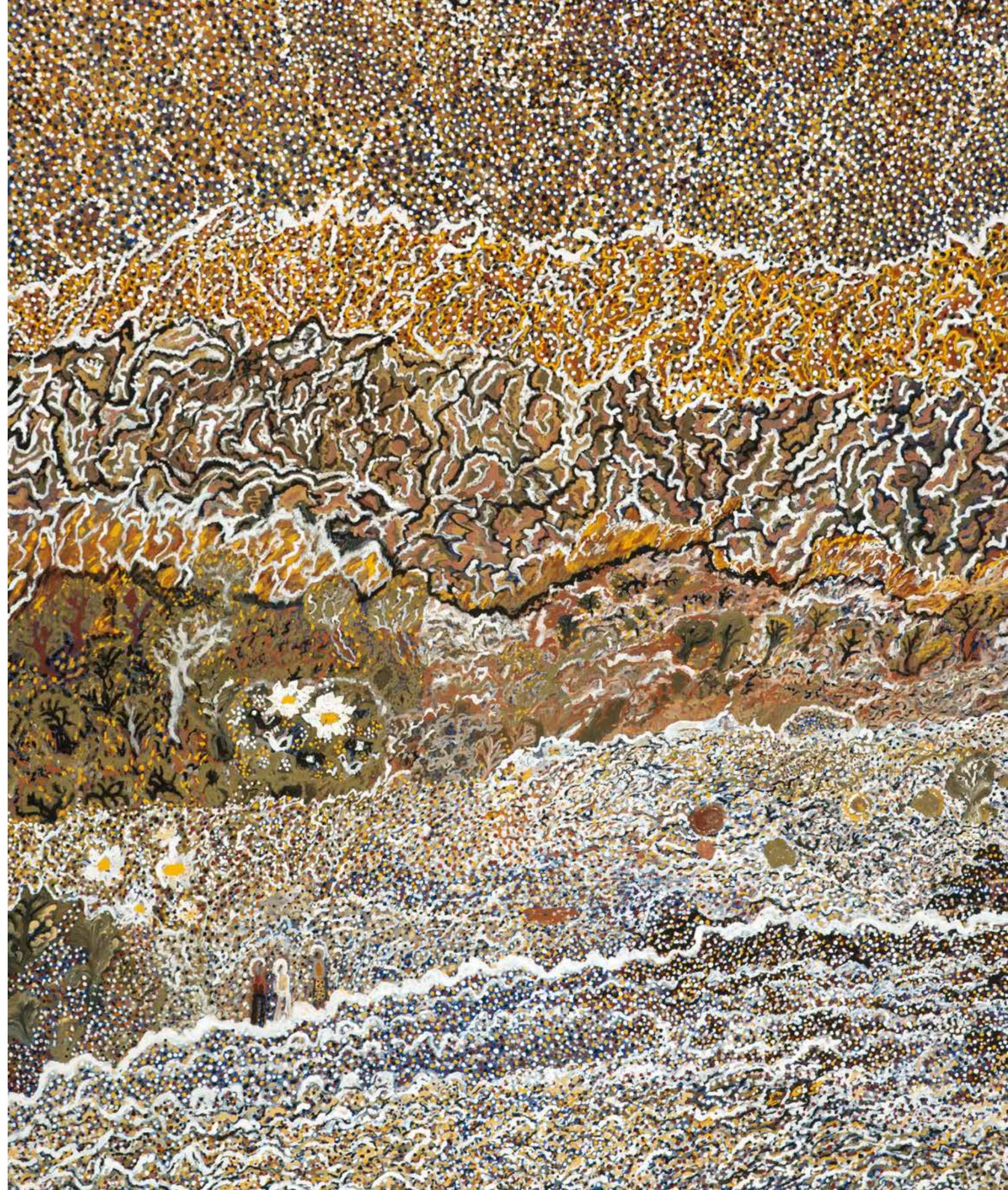
In her study of Country as form and memory, Mills deploys both ochre and synthetic polymer. The combination of traditional and introduced materials in Aboriginal art dates at the very least to the brilliant Wurundjeri artist and leader William Barak, who in works such as *Ceremony with Rainbow Serpent*, c.1880 (National Gallery of Victoria), used pencil, gouache, earth pigments and charcoal on paper, demonstrating not only that creative expression could withstand the 'originary violence' of colonialism, but could make meaning out of and from its brutal regimes (social, political and aesthetic).² In this sense, Mills's field of smoky grey that seems to shroud other forms – which we might imagine represent Country's elements – is not what we need to see past in order to get to the other side, but is the very thing we need to see to understand our ecological relationships to Country, spirits and ancestors across time.

In fact, long before British invasion, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists adapted the use of colour in rock art in response to new phenomena – in particular, the Makassan visits to the Top End, which were recorded in rock art as early as the sixteenth century.³ In depicting Makassan sea vessels, artists made complex and subtle changes to the existing art system, increasing the use of black pigment and dry pigment techniques in order to portray the Makassan ships in rock art.⁴ Artists such as Mills continue in this tradition of active adaption of form and materials.

p. 158: Darrell Sibosado, Bard people, Western Australia
born Port Hedland, Western Australia 1966
Aalingoon (Rainbow Serpent), 2019, Lombadina,
Western Australia
corten steel, 205.0 × 120.5 × 11.0 cm,
300.0 × 84.5 × 11.0 cm, 221.0 × 120.0 × 11.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© the artist, courtesy N.Smith Gallery
photo: Saul Steed

p. 159: Garry Sibosado, Bard people, Western Australia
born Derby, Western Australia 1974
top left: *Garril (tern/sea bird)*
top right: *Rirralb (storm to the north)*
bottom left: *Goolalii (storm to the west)*
bottom right: *Barrbagoon (storm to the south)*
2025, Lombadina, Western Australia
guwan (pearl), earth pigment, 15.0 × 10.0 cm (each)
Courtesy the artist
© the artist
photo: Michael Jalaru Torres

p. 161, detail: Mavis Ngallametta, Kugu-Uwanh people,
Queensland, born Kutchenoopen, Kendall River,
south of Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland 1944,
died Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland 2019
The mouth of Kendall River, 2015, Aurukun, Queensland
earth pigments and charcoal on linen, 267.0 × 200.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2015
© the estate of Mavis Ngallametta, courtesy of
Martin Browne Contemporary
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed





p. 162: Tony Albert, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji people, Queensland, born Townsville, Queensland 1981
 Alair Pambegan, Wik-Mungkan people, Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, born Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland 1968
Frontier Wars Bone Fish Story Place, 2014, Sydney
 raffia, earth pigments and synthetic polymer paint on wood (11 pieces), 176.0 x 15.0 x 15.0 cm (each), 176.0 x 365.0 x 15.0 cm (overall)
 Gift of Tony Albert and Alair Pambegan in memory of Arthur Koo-ekka Pambegan Jr through the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2016. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © the artists, Sullivan+Strumpf and Wik & Kugu Arts Centre
 photo: Saul Steed



p. 163: Alair Pambegan, Wik-Mungkan people, Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, born Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland 1968
Walkal-aw (Bone Fish Story Place 1), 2014, Sydney
 earth pigments on canvas, 150.0 x 120.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2015
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © the artist, courtesy of Wik & Kugu Arts Centre
 photo: Greg Piper

Like Mills, Pambegan complicates the notion of abstraction with his painting *Kalben (Flying fox story place)*. Although he uses bands of white, black and blood red ochre to create a geometric pattern, intelligible as abstraction, the work is materially and conceptually grounded in the artist's highly specific relation to the Kalben (Flying fox story place) ancestral story and associated places along the Archer River. Additionally, the work is literally painted from the material and colours of Country. Pambegan's father was Arthur Koo'ekka Pambegan Jr, a lawman, the custodian of Kalben, and an artist whose paintings such as *Untitled XXVI [Walkan-aw and Kalben designs]*, 2008 (National Gallery of Australia), similarly consisted of red, white and black bands of ochre. Pambegan draws on his father's cultural responsibilities and stories, reiterating them in both the form and the spirit of his own paintings.

Karadada Boona's *Wandjina Emerging* works are perhaps the most reminiscent of rock painting of any by the six artists. Wandjina is a significant creator spirit and integral to cultural life in the northwest Kimberley region. The figure of the ancestral spirit has been present in Kimberley rock galleries and cave painting for at least 4000 years and was typically painted at ritual sites. As with Karadada Boona's rendition, which she has painted in soft tones of pinkish-brown and white, the Wandjina is typically depicted with big glaring eyes, a striped halation and dotted body, which represent climatic events and features such as thunderstorms, lightning and rain. Her series of three Wandjina paintings shows the figure at varying degrees of transparency, as if to imply it is on the verge of disappearing only to be revitalised again. This is suggestive of the traditional practice of devotional conservation, whereby the rock art depictions of Wandjina were repainted to restore their vibrancy at regular intervals over thousands of years and into the middle of the twentieth century.

While grounded in deeply felt and lived relations to Country and a shared approach to earthy medium, these six artists demonstrate the formal and conceptual variation and complexity that is alive across art practice. We make sense of this variation again and again when we look, speak and write of such work. On having seen and thought about this selection of works of art in relation to each other for the first time, my initial impression was to write the following note, and so here it is to finish where I began: a limitless calm comes up through smoke; a small amount of earth is mixed with water and a spirit of dust; or else finds its way to us as the bones of fish; otherwise passing through a brutal process (the extraction and smelting of iron ore) only to return now as *Aalingoon (Rainbow Serpent)*. Then we glimpse the immense, beautiful force of a river and retrace 4000 years of mark-making in every gesture.

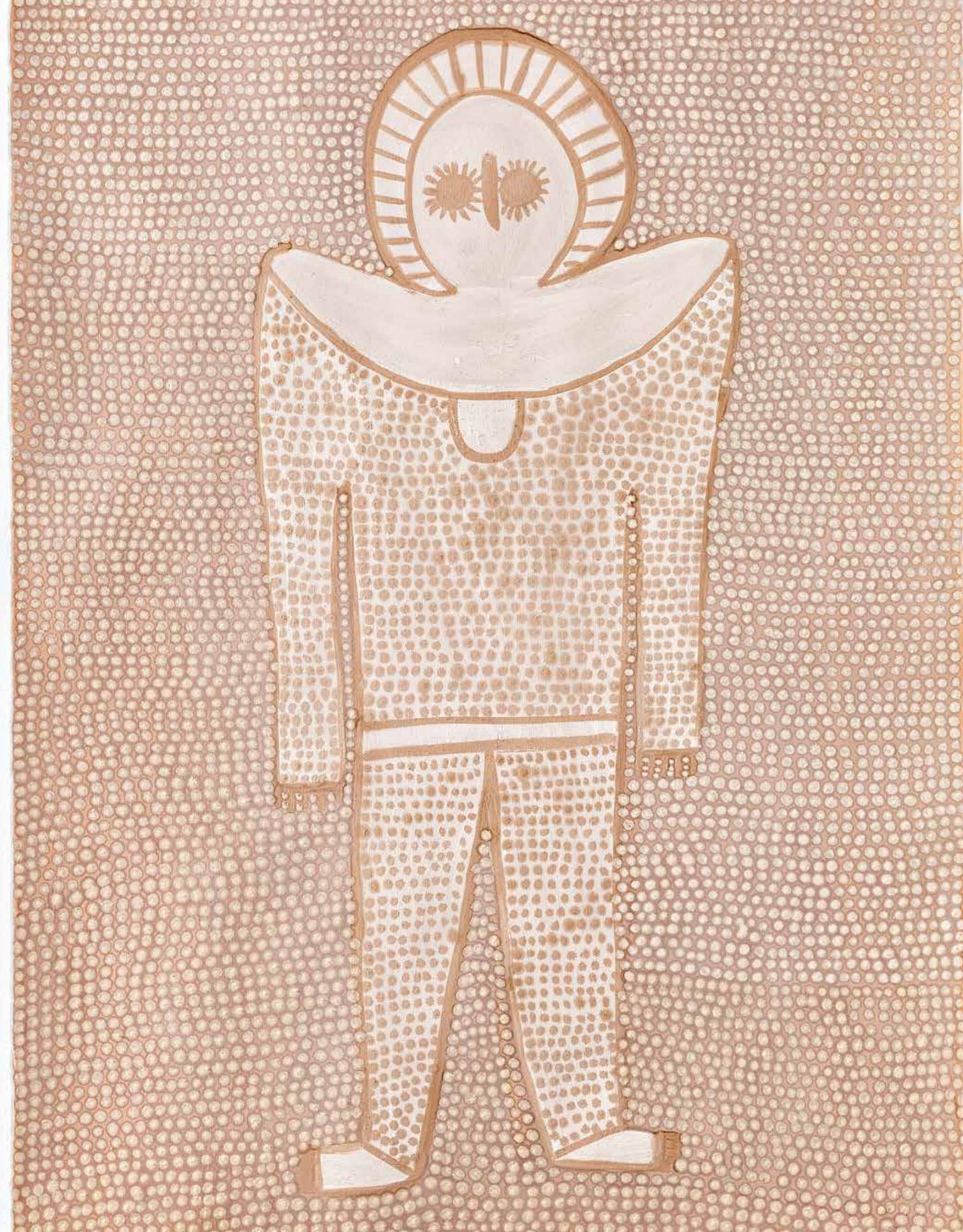
1 Manthia Diawara, 'Friendships: Manthia Diawara presents the art of David Hammons', De 11 Lijnen website, <https://de11lijnen.com/project/friendships-manthia-diawara-presents-the-art-of-david-hammons/>, accessed 14 April 2025.

2 Irene Watson, 'In the Northern Territory Intervention: what is saved or rescued and at what cost?', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 15, no. 2, September 2009, pp. 45–60.

3 Paul S.C. Taçon, Sally K. May, Stewart J. Fallon, Meg Travers, Daryl Wesley & Ronald Lamilami, 'A minimum age for early depictions of southeast Asian praus in the rock art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory', *Australian Archaeology*, vol. 71, no. 1, December 2010, pp. 1–10.

4 Ursula K. Frederick, 'At the centre of it all: constructing contact through the rock art of Watarrka National Park, central Australia', *Archaeology in Oceania*, vol. 34, no. 3, October 1999, pp. 132–44.

Angelina Karadada Boona, Wunambal/Worrorra people, Western Australia, born Kalumburu, Western Australia 1967
Wandjina Emerging, 2021, Kalumburu, Western Australia
 earth pigments and natural resin on paper,
 150.0 × 102.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Angelina Karadada Boona, courtesy Waringarri Aboriginal Arts
 photo: Saul Steed



‘Tiwi people, they still got their culture strong’

Eugenia Flynn and Pirrawayingi Puruntatameri

My Tiwi father, Pirrawayingi, says ‘She’s such a respected old lady, but she’s passed away now, a few years ago.’

We are sitting together, chatting on Zoom. He is in Darwin and I am in Melbourne. I am showing him various Tiwi artworks on the little shared screen that connects us both across more than 3000 kilometres, the distance between our respective locations. I ask him questions about the images: an intricately detailed painting of orangey-reddish-browney natural pigment on black canvas by Cornelia Tipuamantumirri; a series of over 100 smaller works on paper by various Tiwi from Jilamara Arts & Crafts Association, Munupi Arts and Ngaruwanajirri Incorporated, arranged in a cluster of painted rectangles that spread across a corner, formed by the meeting of two long white walls in a gallery; one of Dad himself, with other Tiwi men, performing ceremony at Tarnanthi in 2019.

In a previous conversation, I tell him that I want to have this talk with him because in the art world, in the world of colonisation and anthropologists and linguists and ethnomusicologists, the delicate balance of representation leans towards non-Tiwi writing on Tiwi. On Tiwi art, language and culture. On Tiwi people. I want to facilitate Tiwi to speak on Tiwi. I want Tiwi voices to have their presence felt and known.

‘A few of us, Elders, when we see her work, we know that because of her being an old lady, that this is actually the real old-time paintings. The proper paintings, from long ago. You can see, daughter, the differences in new people’s painting and her painting. The new Tiwi, the younger generations’ painting is quite different to her painting.’

I am interested in what he sees as an Elder, as a Tiwi embedded in the culture that I am several steps removed from. So I ask Dad Marius: In what way is it different?

‘Because she’s old. The old ways of painting, she had that design and painting that really resembles that era. That’s what’s striking, that’s what strikes me. I noticed that.’

Is that because of the style, the story, or both?

‘It is both, it is everything to do with the story, the style, the way of painting – everything, everything.’

I am in fact-gathering mode, wanting him to share his knowledge with me. I become aware that I am sitting in my university office, an academic and a writer living far away from my Country, asking him to give me his knowledge so I can write it down, send it away to be published. But I push those feelings aside and remember we have talked about these concerns before, and that back then Dad Marius asked me to continue my work, to not abandon my connection to culture, language and family – no matter how far away I am, no matter how anxious I feel.

So I continue, and say: The new style, the works on paper seem quite simple, I think I can see what you are saying. They have quite a different style to them. So these ones would be from the younger generations, would you say?

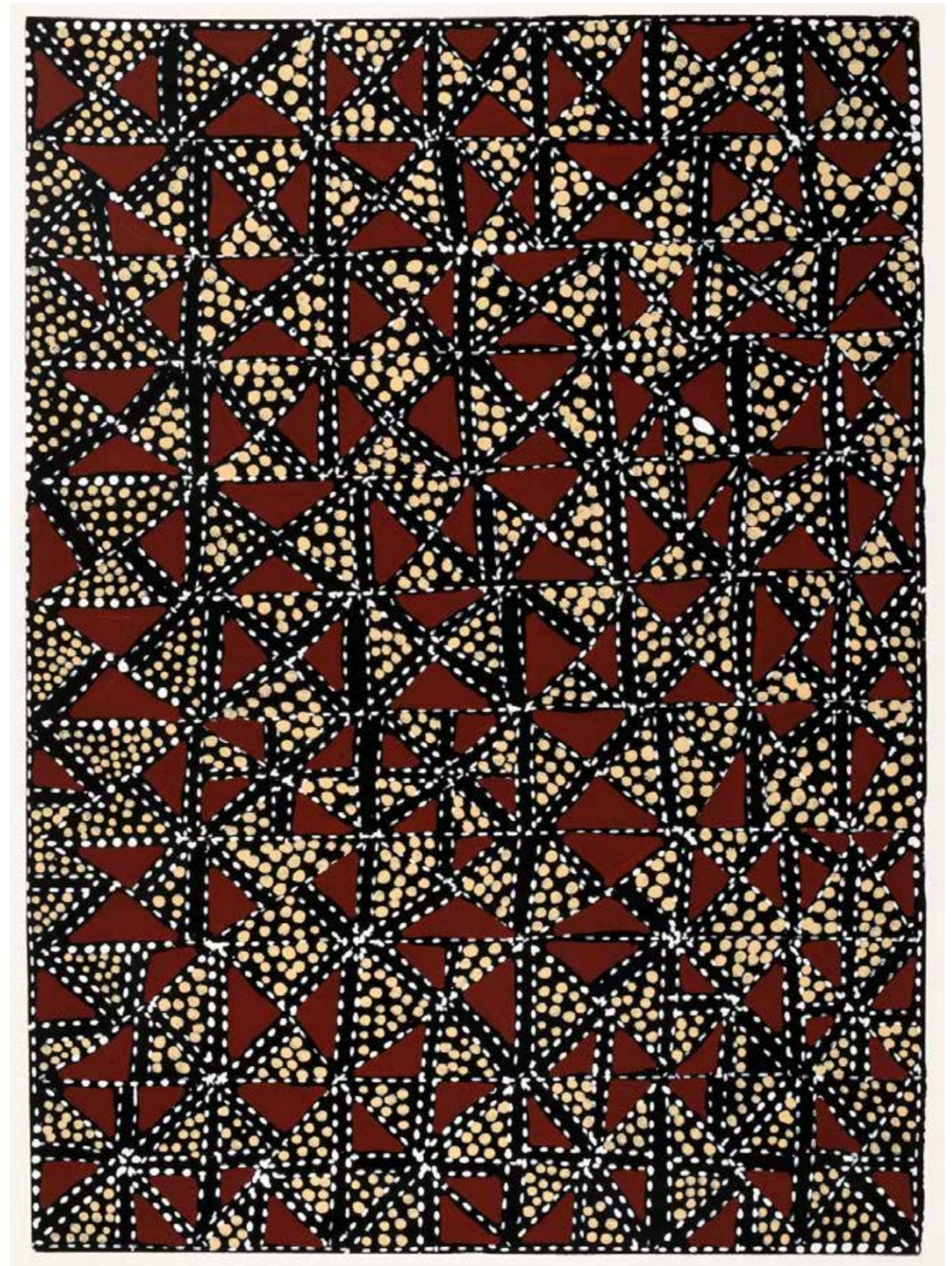
‘Correct.’



Cornelia Tipuamantumirri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory
born Pirlamgimpi (Garden Point), Melville Island c.1929
Jilamara, 2014, Pirlamgimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory
earth pigments on canvas, 150.0 x 180.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by
BHP 2015
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Cornelia Tipuamantumirri, courtesy of Munupi Arts



Columbiere Tipungwuti, Tiwi people, Northern Territory, born Wurrumiayanga, Bathurst Island 1965
Japarra, 2021, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory
 earth pigments on paper, 56.0 x 76.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association
 photo: Stewart Adams



Alison Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory, born Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory 1984
Yilinga, 2021, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory
 earth pigments on paper, 71.0 x 51.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Alison Puruntatameri, courtesy of Munupi Arts
 photo: Stewart Adams

So the style has evolved over time. Why do you think it's different now?

'Obviously, as you yourself know, daughter, there are things, ideas if you like, that have contributed in a holistic way to our way of life and one of them is our artwork, is the artwork that people in this generation do. So yes, it has evolved in that respect.'

Would you want to bring back the old style? Or do you think things have moved and changed, and that's OK?

'Well that's a good question, daughter, and my response to that is this: it is good to still keep the tradition – what I call the traditional art – it is good to keep that but it is also good to have the modern art. Because, and daughter I always say this to people, and I say to myself as well, when I talk to people, and they ask me questions, my response to them, I have to have a reason like everybody else. But it has to be a good reason to respond to any issues, really. Like, everybody has got their reasons but those reasons may not be true sometimes, people might just make things up. So I just have to have a reason for saying things. But I always, because of my honesty, I always talk from my perception and my perception comes with – like yours and everyone else's – with my values, integrity, our culture and being honest on how I see things.'

I am confused by what Dad Marius is trying to tell me, so I focus on the thread he started about the old style and new style. I tug at this thread and a memory emerges from the recesses of my brain. I remind him: remember when I came up to Darwin in August last year and we went out and had dinner? I remember when we were together, you were talking about language and I was really surprised to hear you say that the language younger Tiwi are speaking now is different from the original Tiwi. And that's what you're saying about the painting, the artwork, right? That the original is different to how it is now. It's evolved and changed.

'Absolutely. If anything, you know, I've come to understand – I don't understand everything, but I do know our culture, and not only our culture but our language, but also the art and everything. Everything in life has evolved. And I don't make any judgements on that, if it's good or bad. I don't do that. It just comes with how we evolve. In actual fact, I have more of a sense of appreciation.'

I am still not picking up what Dad Marius is trying to tell me. I ask an inane follow-up question to keep the conversation flowing, drawing on my years of experience in interviewing, part of my work as a writer: what do you mean by that? More of a sense of appreciation?

'Well, I would rather appreciate things than being judgemental, if I can put it that way. I'd rather be optimistic than pessimistic.'

The penny has finally dropped for me. I respond to the knowledge he is sharing with me more fully this time: you know when whitefellas say we are the oldest living culture in the world? I think it's important to acknowledge that this means living – it's a living culture – and things do change, they aren't fixed, they don't stay the same, and that's OK. It's great that there are younger ones that are still making art and are speaking language because lots of others have already lost that, so it is so important to do it.

'You are absolutely right, one hundred per cent. And I forgot to add this – and thank you for reminding me of this, daughter – even though our culture and language, like many other cultures and languages all over the world, how they evolve, it is still recognised as our own Tiwi language and culture. So everything is still there, it is still strong. The fact that it's changed,

Jilamara and Munupi performers at the launch of Tarnanthi 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: John Montesi





it doesn't mean that it's not strong. It's still recognised, we still recognise it, and people do. Mamuruntawi [whitefellas] still recognise our culture – “oh the Tiwi people, they still got their culture strong”

After we end the Zoom meeting, I sit and reflect on what Dad Marius has shared with me, what he has taught me. I think about my father, Sonny, who left his homelands and moved to Adelaide to study anthropology. How he dotted our house with shelves full of books about Aboriginal affairs, culture, people, literature. How in among those books were Tiwi language tapes, books on Tiwi people, culture and art. How he was claimed by Raphael Aputimi – Aminayi Raphael – who travelled down south to attend his graduation at the University of Adelaide, as a proud father. How his four daughters, with our fair skin and our Asian looks – further amplified by the genes of our Chinese mother – grew up Tiwi through frequent road trips north and south, south and north, up and down the Stuart Highway.

Then, I remember watching my Tiwi grandmothers and aunties set up in our front yard. I see them in my childhood memory sitting cross-legged on sheets and blankets on the grass, facing each other while they played cards and sank into the slow passage of time. I think of them teaching us ceremony as kids and how that muscle memory instinctively comes back when Dad Marius performs at Tarnantheni and other arts events; how he calls us daughters in, to get us back into ceremony as adults now.

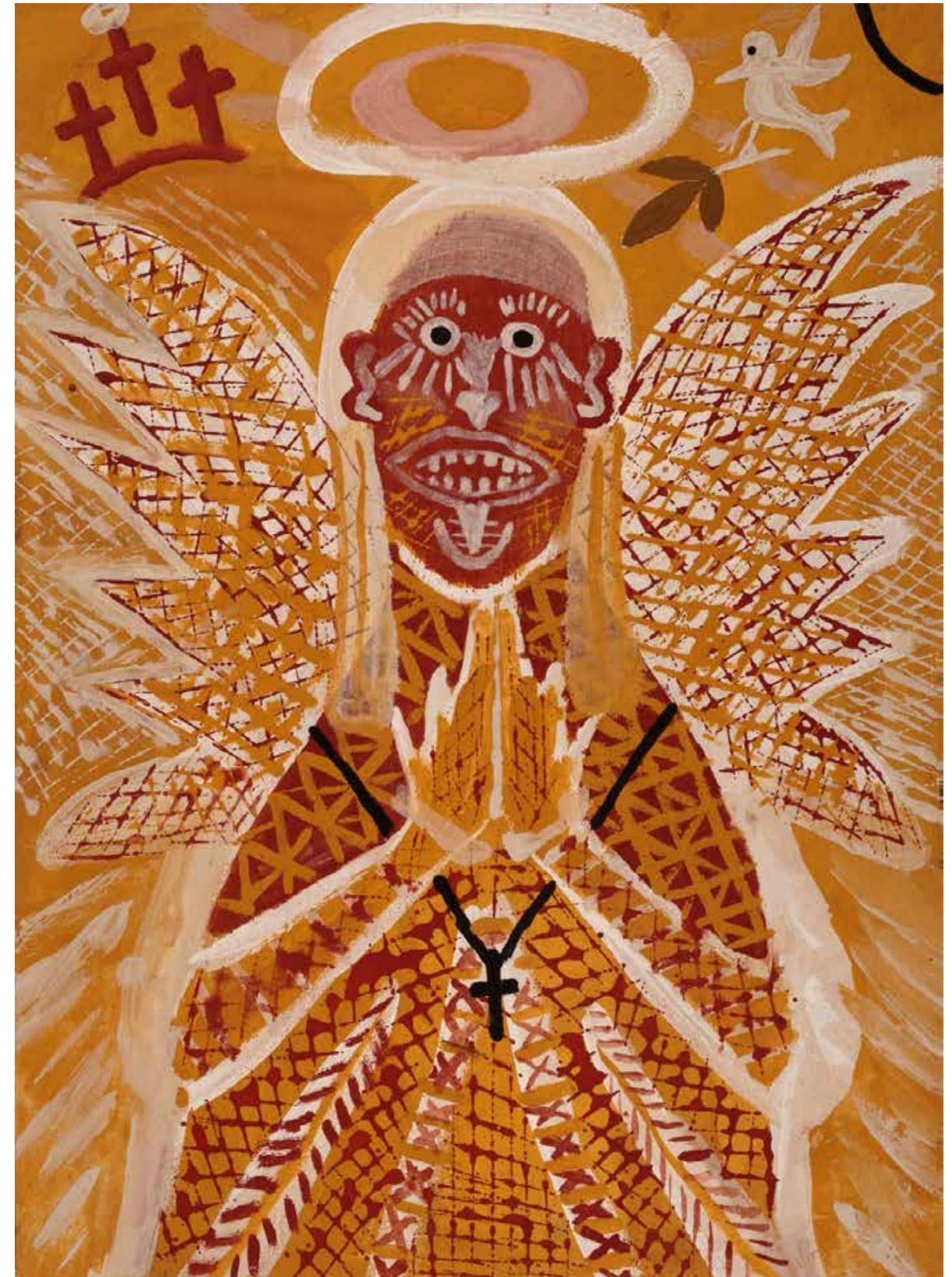
I wonder: what does it mean to be Tiwi? Back then, in the 1990s, when I was growing up in Adelaide? What about in the 1930s and 1940s, when Cornelia Tipuamantumirri would have been growing up on Country, in among the ‘old style’? Or now, as contemporary Tiwi artists make works on paper in the ‘new style’?

I answer myself: it means old style, new style and everything in between. It means using my platform and my privilege to facilitate the voices of Tiwi to speak on Tiwi art, language and culture. It means writing with Dad Marius, across the Zoom screen, sending him writing in English so he can send his approval back in Tiwi. It means, *this* is Tiwi.

p. 172: Timothy Cook, Tiwi people, Northern Territory born Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory 1958
Kulama, 2011, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory
earth pigments on paper, 56.0 × 76.0 cm
Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts and Crafts

p. 173: Johnathon World Peace Bush, Tiwi people, Northern Territory, born Darwin 1974
Untitled, 2021, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory
earth pigments on paper, 56.0 × 76.0 cm
Gift of the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2022
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts and Crafts
photos: Stewart Adams

pp. 174–5: Installation view featuring Tiwi papers, Tarnantheni 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed





Julie Gough: Psychoscape

Ali Gumillya Baker

Psychoscape is mainly about my state of mind in trying to access our Country — across Lutruwita/Tasmania, from which we the Tasmanian Aboriginal people are mostly locked out, since we were almost killed off ... but I can get to see it, our Country, in colonial artworks ... so I respond to some of those held in the Art Gallery of South Australia.¹

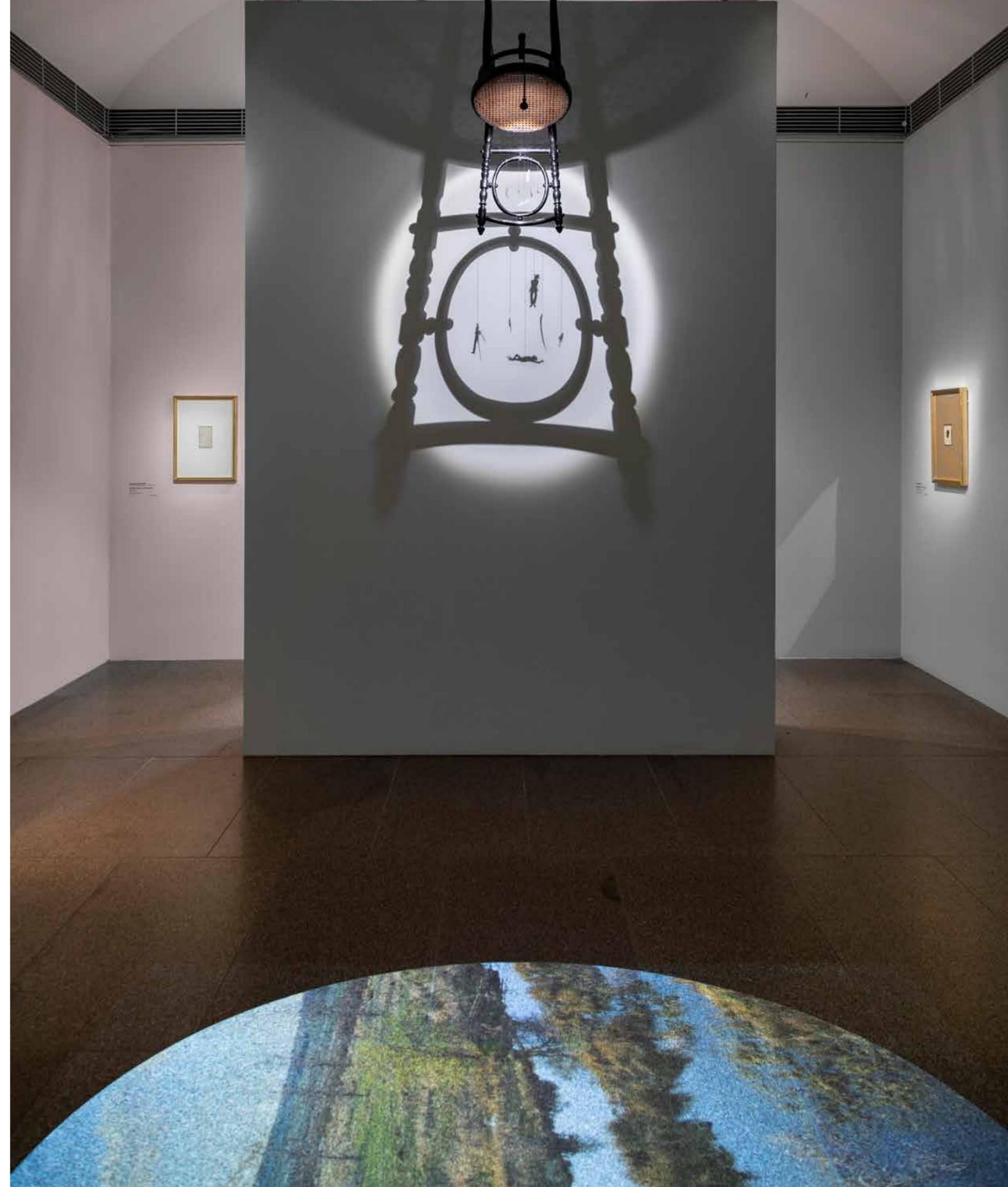
In 1998 I visited the Glenelg River on a road trip across the country, travelling through Bungandidj and Gunditjmara lands, through the landscape of what is now called southeastern mainland Australia. Before my friends and I left on this journey, my friend, the late historian Bill Thorpe, told me that the Glenelg River 'ran red with blood' when the white people colonised that place. I remember standing on the banks of this incredibly beautiful wide and strong river, and the image of red blood flashed in my mind continuously.

I was recently reminded of this violent memory while viewing Julie Gough's installation *Psychoscape* at the Art Gallery of South Australia in Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art 2021. Gough's video projection *Psychoscape (River Clyde)*, 2021, finds the exact spot where Eugene von Guérard depicted his *Waterfall on the Clyde River, Tasmania, 1877*, a colonial painting that is also held in the AGSA collection. At one point in the video projection, the view of the River Clyde flashes red and then back to grey-blue-green before we are taken to static and white noise. Among the installation are various items of colonial furniture and paintings drawn from AGSA's collection and the collection of the artist. *Psychoscape* speaks back to seemingly static colonial representations, as well as the moving capture of images from across the artist's Country. The installation takes us on a journey that traces and retraces violent moments, creating disturbing meditations on truth-telling and justice, as Gough states in her catalogue essay:

These objects forever map the encroachment of colonists on my home Country, while also standing for our dislocation, exile, banishment, loss, absence. Yet, still here, we wander these halls of colonial representations and perspectives, almost ghosts in their machine, where our ancestors are reduced, avoided or eliminated.²

The assemblage of video, sound, colonial paintings and prints, alongside historical objects (such as a Brown Bess musket, plastic keyrings of Aboriginal warriors and colonial Vandemonian furniture) in *Psychoscape* are unsettling. The spinning video footage on the floor and the background soundscape of humming engine/doom, intersected by bird calls, creates an underlying feeling of nausea and tension in the viewer, reminding us that we are all implicated as witness in the military surveillance of these places: a case of unsettling and continuing coloniality. The contemporary interactions that Gough had with white landowners while making the work are also unnerving. The processes of creating the work were discussed by the artist during Panpapanpalya, the conferencing day held on 15 October as part of Tarnanthi's public programs. Gough's work formally identifies the ongoing and enduring force of violence in the landscape. The work raises important questions about how and why Aboriginal people must continue to ask permission of white landowners to be on our Country, and why we are constantly and continually locked out of our Country, places that were unlawfully taken in the first place.

Installation view featuring *Psychoscape* by Julie Gough, Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed



Contemporary relational, racial and legal identities are read through our interactions with these moments, objects and records of colonial violence. Aboriginal people are compelled to break the representational feedback loop. *Psychoscape* reminds us that Australia's settler-colonial landscape is remade through a layering of violent histories in a present that contains, legalises and institutionalises the lies and broken promises across marked landscapes. This is the settler-colonial enclosure that is interrogated by Gough:

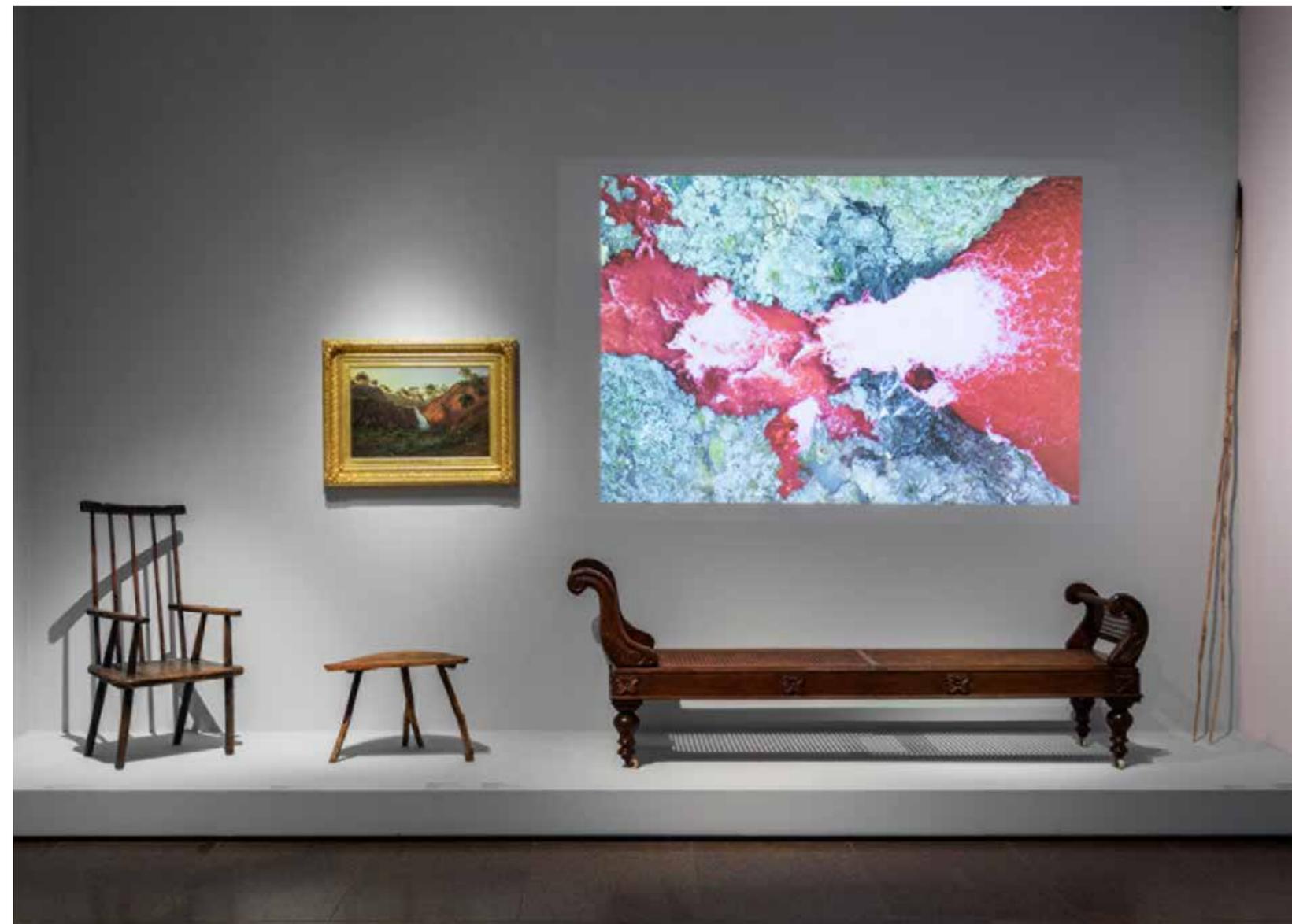
I walk on Country, to reground, re-energise, be directed, to function, to respond. Getting on Country for Aboriginal people in Lutruwita/Tasmania is a political act, an action of defiance, survival against cultural genocide. So much Country is locked up, private property, held in land title deeds by newcomers since the early 1800s.³

This work speaks to Aboriginal people, to our entangled positioning, which is both a collective containment and a simultaneous expulsion from the colonial-settler-nation-state. This is a politicised, polarised and haunted space. We are written out through the attempted visual terra nullius of the colonial archive (including its paintings, antiques and historical narratives), and at the same time we are reconstructed, erased and contained within settler narratives and paintings that provide the 'evidence' — often post-fact — of settler innocence. The sites of massacre and murder are most often not memorialised. Our artistic responses to these attempts by the coloniser to eradicate our voices and bodies are part of our ongoing refusal to be erased, and these works demonstrate our continued visual sovereignty.

Gough's exhibit also offers a 'live' window onto the Country of Lutruwita, where the action explored in *Psychoscape* took place. Gough's garden in Nipaluna/Hobart is the site of a livestream into AGSA's gallery 8. Plastic key ring figures of an Aboriginal warrior with a spear and a white swagman sway suspended from a wattle tree, while their compatriots are stuck, static, framed adjacent on the gallery wall. These figures are as much inventions of culture and history as the colonial landscape paintings sharing the space. The livestream video is also a reminder of how little actual space in the private/public, so-called 'common' realm of civic space is Indigenous-controlled space, and how we are treated as strangers and are often homeless on our sovereign Country. We are asked to pay for permits in 'national parks' while few of our community own or control 'private property'. And the real estate boom continues. In so many ways, our engagement with our Country is controlled by the present and past colonial-debt-theft-landscape.

Within her installation, Gough reframes a notorious piece of painted visual propaganda, distributed towards the end of three decades of massacre and removal of Aboriginal people in Tasmania. This post-massacre-political-spin supposedly warns and suggests a moral code to the Aboriginal peoples of Tasmania, that if they did not kill [Europeans] they would not be killed [by Europeans]. As Gough describes the colonial government's commissioned panels, colloquially named *Governor Arthur's Proclamation to the Aborigines*, 1830, which were nailed to trees in Lutruwita/Van Diemen's Land/Tasmania:

These panels were part of a campaign after the fact by the colonial leadership to cover up the rapidity and illegality of the near annihilation of the original landholders. Described as 'Governor Arthur's Proclamation to the Aborigines' these now infamous and priceless panels, of which only seven have surfaced in collections internationally, were affixed to trees, to purportedly demonstrate that equal justice would be meted to whoever killed an Aboriginal person, or a colonist.⁴



Installation view featuring *Psychoscape* by Julie Gough, Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Saul Steed

Within Gough's installation *The Promise*, 2019–21, lies and broken promises drift in the air across the wall: light directed through a suspended chair and miniature figures cut from kangaroo vellum create a silhouette scene of murderous violence. Gough describes these interactions as 'shadows of a silenced past'. Now every institution wants to 'tell the truth', but what will the truth mean for our communities if there is no ethical action to accompany these truths? What about the lies? Who will we hold to account?

It is Indigenous voices of truth that must be heard. Everywhere we were killed, all over this country. As the massacre map developed at the University of Newcastle by Lyndall Ryan shows, the killing was extensive, and the mapping project continues to grow.⁵ What is important to consider is the relationship of these lies of so-called peaceful 'settlement' of this country to the present state of our collective identities. The rivers are still flashing red in our minds, and we cannot walk away from these histories. Gough's prolific and methodical practice is a gift and invitation for continued collective reckoning.

This essay was first published in *Artlink Indigenous_Visualising Sovereignty*, Ali Gumillya Baker & Paola Balla (eds), issue 41:3, December 2021.

1 Julie Gough, email correspondence with the author, 12 October 2021.

2 Julie Gough, 'Through the Psychoscape', in *Tarnanthi 2021* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2021, p. 60.

3 Gough, 'Through the Psychoscape', p. 60.

4 Gough, email correspondence, 12 October 2021.

5 Lyndall Ryan's early research focused on the attempted genocide of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and her research project in the Centre for the History of Violence at the University of Newcastle is an ongoing project as more evidence of massacres come to light; see *Colonial Frontier Massacres, Australia, 1780 to 1930*, <https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php>, accessed 10 November 2021.

Installation view featuring *Psychoscape* by Julie Gough, Tarnanthi 2021, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide photo: Saul Steed



Gloria Strzelecki

Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre has been involved with Tarnanthi since the first exhibition was held at the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2015. Since then, each Tarnanthi Festival has seen artists from the art centre articulate the interconnectedness of Yolŋu and the strong intergenerational sharing of stories and concepts that Yolŋu express through their art. The culmination of these ideas saw artists from the art centre present an exhibition titled *Gurruṯu* during Tarnanthi 2019, which distinctly communicated the Yolŋu concept of connection and what links everyone and everything together.

The Yolŋu word *gurruṯu* can be loosely translated as kinship. The English translation is, however, too limited, as kinship often only refers to people, whereas *gurruṯu* encompasses all living things. In his essay for the 2019 Tarnanthi catalogue, Yolŋu artist and cultural leader Buwathay Munyarryun likened *gurruṯu* to ‘the string that ties us all together’.¹ Munyarryun’s use of string as a metaphor cleverly expresses the fibre that connects everything in the cosmos in a layered network of relationships. Madarrpa clan leader and artist Djambawa Marawili added to this statement, noting that ‘All living things have a *gurruṯu*’.² This includes people and the many elements of the world, such as plants and animals, as well as components such as clan responsibilities and songlines, all intertwined to create a universal bond. *Gurruṯu* is a worldview that frames all Yolŋu life.

Fast-forward to Tarnanthi 2025, where the involvement of Yolŋu artists is celebrated through a showcase of works throughout the exhibition *Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi* and other AGSA gallery spaces. Borrowing Munyarryun’s string analogy, the presentation articulates the relationships between Yolŋu artists and the strong intergenerational sharing of stories and concepts.

As Nici Cumpston and Lisa Slade write in their introductory essay in this catalogue, the intergenerational has been one of the curatorial strategies of Tarnanthi since its inception in 2015. This framework also extends to the way in which the Gallery acquires Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works of art for its collection. As such, in *Too Deadly*, a selection of paintings and larrakitj by women artists working from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre highlights intergenerational acquisitions made by the Gallery, as well as the intergenerational sharing of knowledge that occurs through art.

In *Too Deadly*, a bark painting titled *Ganyu-stars*, 2006, by Gumatj artist Gulumbu Yunupingu, known as the Star Lady, sits in conversation alongside her sister Djakaŋu Yunupingu’s painting and larrakitj, both titled *Tears of the Djulpan*, 2022. These curatorial connections express intergenerational knowledge-sharing and the *gurruṯu* that underpins all Yolŋu art-making. In the case of the two Yunupingu sisters, it is through the Seven Sisters constellation and the story that is woven through the sky and people.

Gulumbu Yunupingu, Gumatj clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 1945, died Nhulunbuy, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 2012
Ganyu-stars, 2006, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 126.5 × 85.0 cm
South Australian Government Grant 2007
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Gulumbu Yunupingu/Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre

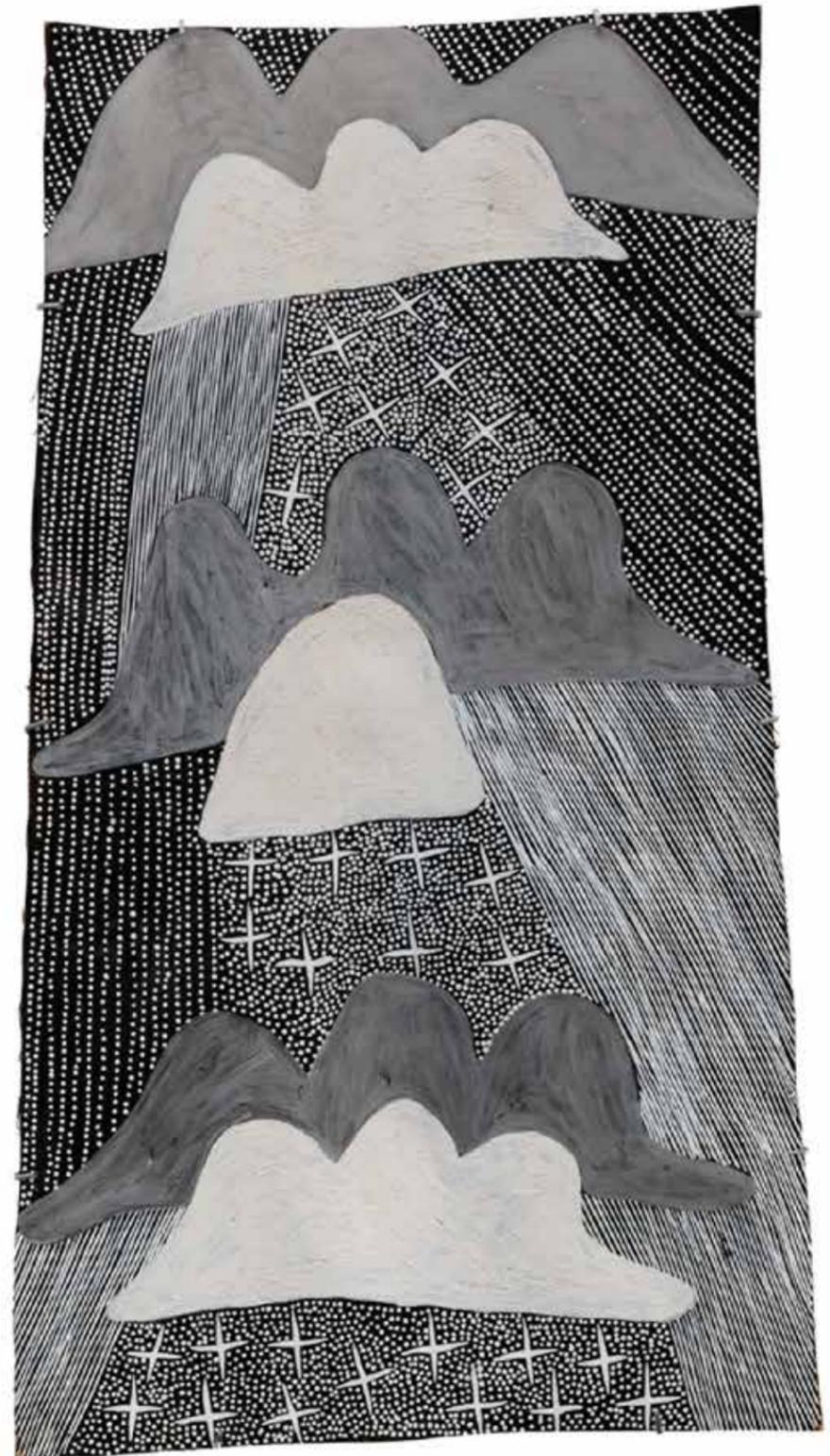




Djakaṅu and Gulumbu Yunupijū were born into a powerful and influential lineage. Their father was the senior lawman and artist Munggurawuy Yunupijū, whose bark paintings and a wooden sculpture acquired in 1957 began AGSA's intergenerational collecting of works by the Yunupijū family. He shared with his daughters the ancestral story of the constellations of Guthayguthay and Nhayay and the Seven Sisters. In her works, Gulumbu Yunupijū renders dense star and dot formations using natural pigments to represent the sky and the infinite cosmos. More than conveying her astronomical knowledge, she reminds us through her works that we are all from the stars, looking at the same sky, and therefore universally connected. Similarly, Djakaṅu Yunupijū uses black pigment and gapan̄ (white clay) to depict the Seven Sisters as they paddle their canoe from island to island, obtaining food from the land. While part of the Seven Sisters story, her account also acknowledges the systems in place to ensure continued balance in the world. If people light fires before the seven sisters have begun to cook their collected food after they return home, they will cry and rain will fall from the sky before its seasonal cycle, disrupting the natural order of things. Djakaṅu Yunupijū paints these tears as the unseasonal rain known as Gurmilili.

Dr Gawirriṅ Gumana AO once said 'if you paint the land, you must use the land',³ meaning that Yolŋu artists must use only materials found on Country. This statement rings true in both Gulumbu Yunupijū's renderings of Ganyu (stars) and Garak (universe), as well as in Djakaṅu Yunupijū's depictions of the Djulpan (Seven Sisters), all painted with earth pigments on stringybark. This tenet has shaped the practices of many Yolŋu artists, such as Dhambit #2 Waṅambi. She is part of an esteemed art family, which includes well-known brothers and sisters W. Waṅambi, Boliny Waṅambi and Ralwurrandji Waṅambi, who continue the legacy of their artist father Mithili Waṅambi, who was also a member of the Special Reconnaissance Unit of the Australian Army, which protected Australia from Japanese invasion during the Second World War. In Dhambit Waṅambi's two larrakitj, titled *Yalanba larrakitj*, 2018, and *Trial Bay*, 2019, the land has literally been placed on the works of art, with Waṅambi fixing the black sand from her homeland, Yalanba, on the ossuaries. The particles of mica in the black sand glimmer like stars against the night sky.

Djakaṅu Yunupijū, Gumatj clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 1949
Tears of the Djulpan, 2022, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 223.0 × 23.0 cm (larrakitj), 135.0 × 68.0 cm (bark painting)
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait
 Islander Art supported by BHP 2023
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Djakaṅu Yunupijū/Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre



Many artists have also adopted 'a new way of thinking'⁴ to allow artistic expansion within the terms of Yolŋu creativity. Some have found 'loopholes' by which they can push creative boundaries while keeping to the Yolŋu edict.⁵ This process began when artist Djambawa Marawili took to painting his miny'tji (sacred designs) through buwayak (invisibility). This meant he was able to render the important and sacred knowledge that his miny'tji reveals in a way that still obscures it for anyone not privy to the information. This act spurred a new generation of making.

One innovative loophole is seen large in the way Madarrpa artist N. Marawili has become known for her use of pink. Her engagement with the hue first began in 2018 after a print workshop, where she first used magenta pigment to create the vibrant colour. Although not found naturally on Country, the colour became Marawili's signature statement because she used magenta toner from cartridges left as waste on Country. While this trailblazing approach to colour is reminiscent of other iconic artists such as Yves Klein, known for his blue tone, Marawili's magenta magic has continued to transform and reimagine any ingrained ideas about Yolŋu art-making. Her artistic ingenuity is also a conservation statement by reducing refuse littering her Country. With lashings of lurid pink tones pulsating against white and charcoal black, Marawili's paintings titled *Baratjala*, 2019, depict the Madarrpa clan site of Baratjala, where Mundukul (the Lightning Snake) resides. The rocky formations in the sea are the site of spectacular natural forces at play, and Marawili demonstrates this movement and energy through paint. She noted:

I paint water designs – the water as it splashes onto the rocks at high tide ... The painting that I do is not sacred. I can't steal my father's [sacred Madarrpa] paintings. I just do my own designs from the outside. Water. Rock. Rocks which stand strong, and the waves which run and crash upon the rock. The sea spray. This is the painting I do ... But I know the sacred designs.⁶

Marawili's paintings exemplify the nuance of her cultural inheritance in the way that she takes her father's story and adapts and transforms it to the personal.

The tradition of intergenerational sharing continues through Marawili to her daughter Marrnyula Mununggurr, who embraces the Djapu clan stories passed down through her father, artist Djutadjuta Mununggurr. Mother N. Marawili once noted that 'this is water and it belongs to our daughter [Marrnyula Mununggurr]. It belongs to her and her father, this painting. This is not anyone's painting. This is Djapu painting for Mununggurr, not for the other Dhuwa clans.'⁷ Indeed, in her painting *Dhawurr*, 2024, Marrnyula Mununggurr renders the dhawurr (fish traps) that are placed across the waters at Waŋdawuy, the ancestral homelands of her clan. She depicts the dhawurr using a grid pattern to express the woven fish traps and Waŋdawuy's network of billabongs surrounded by ridges and high banks. These waters are part of a deep cultural inheritance for Marrnyula Mununggurr.

Dhambit #2 Waŋambi, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Miwatj Region, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 1970, died Northern Territory 2023

far left: *Yalanba larrakitj*, 2019, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) 234.0 cm, 14.0 cm (diam.)

left: *Yalanba larrakitj*, 2018, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) 225.0 cm

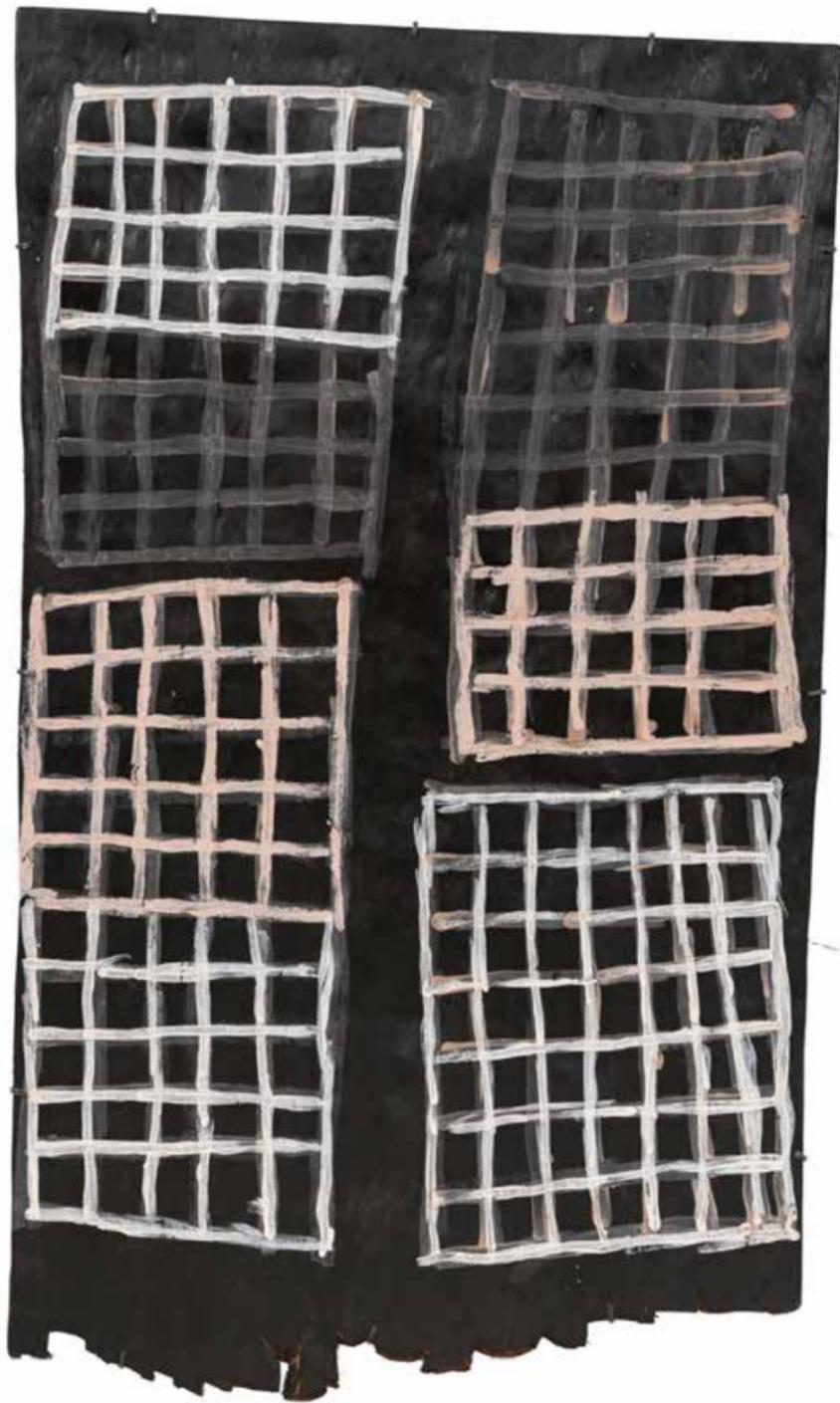
right: *Trial Bay larrakitj*, 2019, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*) 232.0 cm, 17.0 cm (diam.)

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Dhambit Waŋambi/Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre

far right: Ms (Mulkuŋ) Wirrpanda, Dhudi-Djapu/Dhamalimirr clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Dhuruputjpi, Northern Territory c.1942, died Dhudi-Djapu region, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 2021
Njəŋi ga Gundirr, 2019, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*), 262.0 × 24.0 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2021
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Ms Wirrpanda/Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre





Marrnyula Mununggurr, Djapu clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Wangdawuy, Northern Territory 1964
Dhawurr, 2024, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 earth pigments on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 155.5 x 75.0 cm
 Proposed acquisition
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Marrnyula Mununggurr, courtesy of Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre
 photo: Saul Steed



N Marawili, Madarrpa clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Darrpirra, Northern Territory c.1938, died Yirrkala, Northern Territory 2023
Baratjala, 2019, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 earth pigments, recycled print toner pigment on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 230.0 x 135.0 cm
 Gift of Susan Armitage, Mary Choate, Jason Karas and Anna Baillie-Karas, Leo Mahar, Nicholas Sampson and Zena Winser through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2019
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © N Marawili/Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre
 photo: Saul Steed

The trajectory towards a bold non-traditional palette continues in the paintings of Dhambit Mununggurr, daughter of Gulumbu Yunupingu. With her strong artistic lineage, art-making is in Mununggurr's blood. Painting from age twelve, Mununggurr took to her trademark blue hue through necessity. A life-threatening car accident at a young age hindered her ability to crush earth pigments, so she is exempt from the Yolŋu law of making work only from Country. Using synthetic polymer paint in a variety of colours, Mununggurr slowly incorporated the vibrant cobalt that now characterises her practice. Using her non-preferred left hand, Mununggurr paints using a marwat (brush made of hair) and with her trademark hue depicts the sky and sea, because 'Blue is the colour of gapu, of water. The earth is blue, the sky is blue and the sea is blue'.⁸ In her painting *Djapu ceremony ground*, 2022, Mununggurr shares the stories and ceremonial practices that have spanned generations of her Djapu clan. With bold geometric shapes made using the marwat, she renders the ancestral story that involves Mäŋa (ancestral shark), Bol'ŋu (Thunderman), and the wukiŋi (burial ground) at Wandawuy for Mununggurr's Djapu ancestors and three other clans. The field of blue in the centre of the painting references the burial ground.

The interweaving stories that have been shared for generations have been transcribed and translated by these trailblazing artists as they pursue new trajectories. In each of their renderings of their inheritance, each artist, through their individual path, shows the delicate ecosystems in effect across the Yolŋu universe and the harmonious gurruŋu that links each person to a wider global network, as well as the ongoing importance of intergenerational sharing. While the concept of gurruŋu is a Yolŋu view, there is a connection that unites these women artists working from northeast Arnhem Land to the rest of the world through their art.

Ultimately, art is about connection. It is about bringing people and culture together. Words once spoken by Gulumbu Yunupingu, while referencing a large-scale commission for the Musée du quai Branly in Paris, still endure loudly. Yunupingu noted, 'This is from my heart to you, to share, for the whole world to understand my culture ... Whatever your colour and whatever your language, this is for you'.⁹ As the Star Lady added, 'We can all look at the stars, whichever sky we're looking at'.¹⁰ We are all connected, in some way, even if it may just be through the universal sky.

1 Buwathay Munyarryun, 'The string that ties us all together', in *Tarnanthi 2019* catalogue, AGSA, Adelaide, 2019, p. 32.

2 Quoted in Nici Cumpston & Lisa Slade, 'Universal connections, infinite possibilities', in *Tarnanthi 2019*, p. 26.

3 Quoted in David Wickens, 'The loophole', in *Tarnanthi 2019* catalogue, p. 30.

4 Cumpston & Slade, 'Universal connections, infinite possibilities', p. 26.

5 Wickens, 'The loophole', p. 30.

6 Cara Pinchbeck, 'Nongirŋa Marawili: From My Heart and Mind', in *Nongirŋa Marawili: From My Heart and Mind*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2018, p. 21.

7 Pinchbeck, 'Nongirŋa Marawili: From My Heart and Mind', p. 27.

8 'Dhambit Mununggurr: Ocean', Madayin website, <https://madayin.kluge-ruhe.org/experience/pieces/banhdharra-ocean/>, accessed June 2025

9 Hetti Perkins, 'Earth and Sky', in *Earth and Sky*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Vic., 2015, p. 67.

10 Jeremy Eccles, 'Artist saw the stars crying', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 2012, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/artist-saw-the-stars-crying-20120612-207vy.html>

Dhambit Mununggurr, Djapu clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Wandawuy, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory 1968
Djapu ceremony ground, 2022, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
 earth pigments and synthetic polymer paint on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 208.0 x 91.0 cm
 Gift of Dr William J.S. Boyle CM, Mary Choate, the Hon. Justice Mark Livesey through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation Collectors Club 2022
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Dhambit Mununggurr/Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre
 photo: David Suyasa



Listening to Tarnanthi

Jay Gonsalves

What does Tarnanthi sound like? It's a question I've been thinking about for a while.

The question arose at a time just after I stumbled across a quote by Jean-Michel Basquiat, 'Art is how we decorate space, music is how we decorate time'. Quite serendipitous, as it led me down a path of nostalgia, reliving pivotal moments, which in retrospect were underscored by music and sound.

The soundtrack of Tarnanthi began for me during my first shift at AGSA, when I was working as casual event support. It was the 2022 July First Friday event, a night buzzing with excitement, from adults and children alike, as they gazed at the Illuminate Adelaide displays along North Terrace. AGSA and Vincent Namatjira had worked together to project his animated video piece *Going Out Bush* onto AGSA's colonial façade as a part of the Illuminate festival. I had been told that this was going to happen, but didn't quite understand what it meant – I was so focused on trying to do my job right, hoping that the AGSA team would have me back to work. In the fluster of trying to meet the expectations of a job I had no idea how to do, a colleague stopped me and said something along the lines of 'Go look at Vincent's work at the front of the building, everything is under control out here'.

I did just that. As I walked along the western laneway, I remember hearing the chatter and buzz of the First Friday crowd behind me and the faint sound of a guitar engulfed by the voice of the city ahead of me. I remember reaching the top of that laneway and trying to cross the traffic of what seemed to be an infinite number of people, all while attempting to get a glimpse of what was happening on the building. As I settled into a spot to the left of the building, I heard Vincent say in the recording 'Welcome to Indulkana. When the sun goes down, strange things start to happen'. I was so captivated by this work and felt this strange sense of intrigue, a connection to his voice. It was only later on my Tarnanthi journey, after Vincent and I had crossed paths, that I found out my Grandma used to look after Vincent as a boy at the Gap Youth Centre in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Hearing that story from my Nanna sparked a powerful spiritual resonance within me, opening up this sense of connection to my culture in a way that I had never experienced before.

Fast-forward to March/April 2023 (I can't pinpoint when, as that year was the equivalent to getting stuck in a hurricane). This was a period of time in which I learned the depth and impact of silence, despite being the antithesis of sound. Silence can be deafening; it can be captivating, and it can sometimes be the best part of a song through anticipation of what comes next.

For me, silence came at a time where I was experiencing a great deal of stress. I had been tasked with planning and delivering the Tarnanthi Launch for that year, and still felt the greenness in my event coordinator career. It felt as though I was standing at the foot of a mountain, anxious with anticipation to take the first step on a challenge and knowledge-filled pilgrimage, when, like being struck by lightning on a sunny day, my Grandpa was diagnosed with cancer – which he had decided not to get treatment for. As soon as he broke this news to me, overwhelming disbelief and silence cast a shadow over my mind. It was like I could no longer process what he was saying, despite hearing the sentences that followed the



Vincent Namatjira in front of his projection work *Going Out Bush*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, presented as part of Illuminate Adelaide, 2022 photo: Sia Duff

news. If my journey was a song, then this bar of music was an abrupt and unexpected break between rhythm and melody. I had been lucky up until that point, not having experienced the death of someone so close, and now the prospect of such a situation had walked into my field of view, touching someone whom I loved unconditionally. As I continued forward, attempting to plan for Tarnanthi, I endeavoured to reconcile with reality and deal with the domino effect it had on other aspects of my life. That silence had such a grip on me that, before I knew it, I fell into a writer's block and I stopped finding pleasure in music.

However, as time went on, something peculiar begun to reoccur. That silence was broken by the dynamic melodies of Willy Wagtails, accompanied by their dance. I would see them during my lunch break, when I would visit home, and each time I saw one, I couldn't help but stop and witness its performance. Willy Wagtails are said to be messenger birds in many First Nations communities, and I believe that it was the case in this instance. Every time one appeared, the cycle of my own rumination would be broken, and I'd greet a bittersweet moment of clarity. I don't know for certain what these birds were trying to share, but I think their presence was a reminder to stay open to new experiences in this time of sadness, and ultimately, in the words of my Pop's favourite satirical tune, 'Always look on the bright side of life'.

For many who have enjoyed Tarnanthi Festivals, the soundtrack of Tarnanthi might reverberate with clapsticks, coupled with the drone of the yidaki performed on the opening nights. It might include the angelic harmonies of guitar duo the Stiff Gins in 2015, the rhythmic cadence of Yolŋu hip-hop star Baker Boy in 2019, or the heartfelt and soulful voice of Arrernte/Gurindji singer-songwriter Dan Sultan's finale in 2023. These sounds punctuated, and at times defined, my Tarnanthi experience, but I also heard something else, resonating within.

In retrospect, I can see the power in the relationship between silence and sound. It's what makes the crack of Dan Sultan's boomerangs so powerful and why you start nodding your head when you hear Baker Boy's flow without realising it. The space between notes is where the beauty lies, and what draws us into the music, the transition within rhythm is what creates groove and makes us want to move to the music. Without silence, there is no song – a parallel that was keenly felt in my own journey.

I believe the songs of those Willy Wagtails helped me find the next note to play, leading me down the path of grief with the tune of that song my Grandpa would sing.



Arrernte/Gurindji singer-songwriter Dan Sultan performing at the launch of Tarnanthi 2023
photo: Sam Roberts

Whilst the artist is speaking there will be no questions ...!

r e a

The Blak Laundry for me conjures up early memories of yarnning and simultaneously reminds me of the monumental, political power of marching in the streets for land rights! Dominique Chen (Gamilaroi) and Libby Harward (Ngugi Quandamooka) are the dynamic and creative force behind The Blak Laundry.¹ They embody an unquestionable strength and unity that celebrates the power of protest! The Blak Laundry engages in an undeniable relationship with yarnning,² an oral method of transferring knowledge and history that connects them to the ancestors' presence in the everywhen³ – a belonging in which the essence is knowing that, no matter what happens, they will always be connected to Country.

Yarnning is an important cultural knowledge, whereby the tradition of oral languages extends across all Indigenous Country. Further, it enhances the early adaptation of the colonial onslaught of English and Irish slang, which many Indigenous dialects engaged with in order to develop a common language. This activated a new 'politic of blak protest', which was strongly rooted in sovereignty⁴ and survival – Always! The Blak Laundry locates Indigenous artists outside the 'white cube', and reframes Australian contemporary 'white' art by carefully and deliberately situating Indigenous artists and their diverse art practices back on Country and within community – albeit an improvised one. Subsequently, the participating artists and laundry users are invited to join a yarnning circle, activating a site-specific, site-responsive space, which opens up a unique cross-cultural opportunity for all to fully immerse in and engage with this seemingly uncommon performative experience.

In 2023, I was invited by Chen and Harward to yarn about my practice as part of The Blak Laundry's inclusion in the Woodford Folk Festival. My first thought when I entered the space was of my maternal grandmother, who was 'stolen' and forced to work in a laundry for little or no pay! Let's not forget, Australia was a white settler colony, which deliberately, through forced removal policies, institutionalised and privileged 'whiteness'. Reflecting this history, the aim and function of these actions was to deliberately bleach out/remove all stains (Indigenous people), thereby making things whiter (White Australia policy).

The Blak Laundry is actively fighting to debunk these endless colonial narratives and the stereotypes associated with the ideologies of servitude and Christian values, which unashamedly enforced cleanliness by aligning one's body to godliness. Therefore, The Blak Laundry becomes a potent representation that tackles these policies head-on by creating a counter-narrative to what remains as an unresolved stain on Australia's history – blak blood on white hands!

The power of The Blak Laundry's engagement with community is multifaceted and deeply rooted in both cultural reclamation and social justice. The Blak Laundry reveals the ways in which Australian arts organisations and galleries prioritise 'whiteness', and in this racially based selection process the blak body is more often than not invisible, or at best relegated to a 'specific space' in which it is permitted to be viewed – think museums and galleries in particular. bell hooks describes the discourse of the other as functioning to annihilate and erase 'certain kinds of bodies' that don't fit the colonial narrative:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back

to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the coloniser, the speaking subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk.⁵

The Blak Laundry cleverly deconstructs and decentres 'whiteness' through the deliberate creation of a culturally informed yarnning circle, in which Indigenous women's standpoint theory⁶ re-stories a blak feminist perspective, which locates Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.⁷ Finding strength in their collaborative practice and standing 'loud and proud', Chen and Harward make a space that counteracts the dominant 'colonial' narrative, by engaging in the power of reclamation as they collectively activate truth-telling through story. This powerful platform prioritises Indigenous sovereignty. We must always remember, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith reminds us, that strength and courage is continuously being re-storied in our bodies, when the lineage of:

contested accounts are stored within genealogies, within the landscape, within weavings and carvings, even within the personal names that many people carried. The means by which these histories were stored was through their systems of knowledge. Many of these systems have since been reclassified as oral traditions rather than histories.⁸

Let us not forget that Chen and Harward have brought us all together by cleverly combining a working laundromat with a range of opportunities for artistic expression and community engagement, by supporting and proactively encouraging Indigenous artists to speak their truth while also addressing political themes of colonialism, racism and self-determination. The Blak Laundry is truly a space where people can gather to wash their clothes, engage in critical cultural and creative conversations, and even maybe have a cup of tea while listening to Indigenous creatives sharing their lived experiences and stories as the machines drone on.

- ¹ 'The Blak Laundry is a functional laundromat + living artwork', Blak Laundry website, <https://www.theblaklaundry.com.au/about>, accessed May 2025. The term Blak was originally coined in 1991 by Destiny Deacon, a pioneering artist of KuKu (Cape York) and Erub/Mer (Torres Strait) descent. It stands as a reclamation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity.
- ² Stuart Barlo, Bill Boyd, Alessandro Pelizzon & Shawn Wilson, 'Yarnning as protected space: principles and protocols', *AlterNative*, vol. 16, no. 2, June 2020, pp. 90–8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180120917480>, accessed May 2025.
- ³ Stephen Gilchrist, 'Everywhen: the eternal present in Indigenous art from Australia', Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, 2016, <https://harvardartmuseums.org/exhibitions/4983/everywhen-the-eternal-present-in-indigenous-art-from-australia>, accessed May 2025.
- ⁴ Aileen Moreton-Robinson (ed.), *Sovereign subjects: Indigenous sovereignty matters*, Routledge, London, 2007, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003117353>, accessed May 2025.
- ⁵ bell hooks, *Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics*, South End Press, Boston, MA, 1990, pp. 151–2, <https://thepoliticsofglobalart2018.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/bell-hooks.pdf>.
- ⁶ Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 'Towards an Australian Indigenous women's standpoint theory: a methodological tool', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 28, no. 78, 2013, pp. 331–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2013.876664>, accessed May 2015.
- ⁷ Karen Martin–Booran Mirraboopa, 'Ways of knowing, being and doing: a theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist re-search', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 76, 2003, pp. 203–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050309387838>, accessed May 2015.
- ⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing methodologies: research and Indigenous peoples*, Zed Books, London, 1999, p. 33, <https://nycstandswithstandingrock.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/linda-tuhiwai-smith-decolonizing-methodologies-research-and-indigenous-peoples.pdf>.

pp. 198–9: *It will all come out in the wash, Bub*, Gamilaroi artist Dominique Chen and Ngugi Quandamooka artist Libby Harward, at The Blak Laundry, 2023
photo: Ketakii Jewson-Brown



AGITATION
IN
PROGRESS

HEAVY
LOAD





Woven within Stars
Regional Tarnanthi

Marika Davies

Our knowledge-building begins as children. Exploring our Countries, interacting with all living creatures, sitting in dry riverbeds, scooping up the clay and rubbing it between our fingers, sifting through its silken body to find the grains of sands, searching for the details that go beyond the body of clay itself.

We also learn about our Country by looking up to the night sky, knowing that is where we all came from and will return to one day. Our Country and waterways are etched with stories that teach us about our place within the stars – where we belong in the universe. We are all woven within stars, as every living being can trace its existence back to the beginning of creation and because we believe the beginning of creation by our ancestors is spiritually present today.

Woven within Stars, an exhibition presented in partnership by the Art Gallery of South Australia and Country Arts SA, features the work of nine independent regional artists: Regina McKenzie, Donny McKenzie, Jenna Richards, Vera Richards, Lavinia Richards, Patricia Fatt, Regg Dodd, Jonas Dare and Roy Coulthard. It is the second exhibition developed through Regional Tarnanthi, an ongoing partnership between the two organisations, and follows the success of *Saltbush Country* in 2023. The exhibition provides a platform for the work of regional First Nation artists – this year, from across northern South Australia and Port Lincoln. *Woven within Stars* is unique given that the artists are independent and several of them work from home, making an important statement about how much more regional artists can achieve when they receive support, encouragement and opportunity.

As Tarnanthi Regional Curator, I have been lucky to be able to travel along ancient songlines and connect with a new mob of regional First Nations artists for this second iteration of Regional Tarnanthi. Being able to witness the artists' development and output feels sacred to me, and I am honoured to be in the role, bearing witness to their creativity, watching their works come to life and helping to showcase their beautiful art to the public.

A theme of strength echoes through all their works and practices. Each artist is a survivor and community leader in their own right. These are powerful individuals, creating works that speak to our communities' power and resistance – our stories live on.

The stories that are present within these artists' works are deeply rooted in their cultural and lived experiences, demonstrating that their works stretch beyond the art form, but encapsulate stories that are thousands of years old.

Through the journey of creating works for this exhibition, the artists have been given opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge through mentorships. This has opened up new possibilities of practice for each artist, either by learning a new skillset or enhancing an existing set of skills.

Like seeds, their works of art are symbols for the infinity of ever-changing growth. They sprout old stories, in the same way that seeds sprout new life from old plants, a reincarnation of narrative. Every seed is a story, every work of art is a seed, brought to life by the hands of each of these artists.

Culture is a cloak, wrapped around our bodies and deeply centred into our spirit (tjukurpa). Culture cloaks all living beings, including the land herself. It shimmers across waterways and stretches across our skies, radiating in every star. Culture is our life.

pp. 200–1: Marika Davies at sunrise in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025

p. 203: Marika Davies in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025
photos: Nat Rogers



Caring for Country

Donny McKenzie

Andrew Allen

Donny McKenzie lives in Davenport, in Nukunu Country, on the hot, sandy and dry land between Port Augusta's harbour and the ranges. As a boy, Donny had a bit of a wild streak — he loved roaming the open land, but he also loved hearing the stories of his home, the land and the animals around him. It was these stories that first fired his imagination and would go on to fuel his art over the years.

Donny's first experiences with art came from the community around him — family and school. He had a natural ability early on, which not only helped him to learn and understand the stories but also connected him to the past and the natural world. Like so many artists, it provided a sanctuary where he could find peace, even if only for short periods. There were always mentors and teachers in those early years, although Donny says, 'It's just doing it that's the best teacher. Most of the time, you don't know you're learning when you love what you're doing; you're just doing it'.

As much as he loves drawing and painting, Donny has always been ready to try his hand with different materials. As an artist, he is known mostly for his sculptural work. Over the years, he has worked with rock, wood, metal, glass, mosaic, and just about anything else he can get his hands on. Often several materials are combined into one sculptural idea.

More recently, Donny has started to look towards clay and the shapes, textures and decorative possibilities it holds. Clay is technically demanding and the process can be long and complex. That's where I come into Donny's story. Clay is my specialty, and I've helped to guide Donny in what he can do and the best ways to go about it.

I first met Donny at a raku firing workshop that was run through Country Arts SA in Whyalla. Donny was the artistic and cultural adviser to the group of artists who came to decorate pots and have them fired. We've worked together a few times since and have developed a strong friendship and an intuitive understanding of how we both work. It often involves me explaining to Donny how he can make certain shapes and achieve the types of surfaces and colours he wants. At this point, Donny's mind ignites with a stream of different ideas. The more I talk about technique and shapes, the more his ideas flow. It's here I get to see Donny walk the line between contemporary and traditional art — between a wild and free artist with rebellious tendencies and one who is respectfully aware of his responsibilities and the stories he can and can't tell. From playful to quietly serious, from sombre and reflective to flowing with ideas and excitement, watching Donny work is both an honour and an inspiration.

His work tells the story of his life, his people and the land — from the present all the way back to the ancient past.

Wangkangurru and Adnyamathanha artist Donny McKenzie with his ceramic work in Port Augusta, Nukunu Country, South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers



The Colour Of My Skin

Lavinia Richards

Lavinia Richards is a Barngarla storyteller and mother of five children. More fondly known as Auntie Lovey, she is Gadyini (Grandmother) to nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and is devoted to family. As a girl she was born and raised in Port Lincoln. She is the middle of seven children, a pivot between six children removed and one staying behind.

She was abruptly taken by government welfare men and involuntarily compelled into the role of mothering at the age of nine. A random summoning into the office by the headmaster at Kirton Point Primary School in 1967 began days of unfolding disbelief: driven off by a stranger in a car with her younger brother and cousin, no reason given for the excursion back to the family home to watch the snatching of their baby brother, the sound of her mother's inconsolable lament and loud vocal protest still audible in her mind today. The sisters and baby brother stayed overnight with a police officer's family while the boys spent the night in the cells, arrested and charged with neglect. The following day at the wharf there was another strange and surreal farewell with family. Led up the gangplank, the babies and small children were huddled inside a small lounge area aboard the *Troubridge* and on 15 June 1967 they sailed away on the freighter with the cars and the cattle to Adelaide, all they had known fading to dusk.

Lovey knows the value of cautious storytelling. It is this care that is central in her life; she keeps her family close and her house busy. It is the way she copes and only on occasion does she pause to think, to recall and remember. In these rare moments she is reminded of the pain that cannot truly be erased, her longing to say *Mum I wish I could spend more time with you*, regretting not knowing more intimately what her mother felt and what she went through. Time drifts and then suddenly the opportunity to talk is gone. Unbelievably, Lovey retains a handful of letters in her mother's beautiful cursive handwriting, received during her incarceration at Windana remand home and Seaforth Home and the years in foster care – stark messages of family news and endearing treaties of love. *My dear daughter, from your loving Mum.*

Creative story writing allows Lovely to find cathartic expression, creating images of what she has endured, a private map to her patterns of thought. It is this process that assists her to heal and to feel grounded. The beauty of this work subdues past restlessness, a perceived non-acceptance and an absurd guilt for her absence.

Now she returns to her childhood with a renewed passion. Through the skills of Ngarrindjeri creator Isaac Coen Lindsay, her story is being transformed to animation, a metaphysical avenue to revive, to inflate the telling for self-benefit and ownership. Titled *The Colour Of My Skin*, this narration is the peak of poignant truth-telling and acts as a spark of hope.

Standing within the strength of her heart, Lovey is also gifting her story to a wider Australian audience, primarily to educate about the long-term government practice to remove Aboriginal children from their families and that these actions continue today. There is no doubt of the deep impact this policy has upon these children.

Ali Cobby Eckermann



Barngarla and Wirangu artist Lavinia Richards on Country in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), 2025
photo: Nat Rogers

Reg Dodd



Reg Dodd is an Arabunna Elder and artist based in Marree, in the north of South Australia.

His work, *SEEDING OUR FUTURE*, depicts plants of the Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre Basin, printed onto small pouches filled with their seeds. Each of these plants either provides food or prevents soil erosion. His work is an important commentary on the significance of these plants and their place in the ecosystem.

Growing up on Finnis Springs Mission Station, Dodd was taught by the old men and women about the stories that serve as a map of the land, where to find water and important knowledge about the plants and animals. He learnt at a very early age which plants were food, which were medicine, and which helped to stop the erosion of the land.

Dodd started making art from the age of five, using chalk and blackboard. He quickly moved on to photography as a medium, which has become an important form of communication for him.

Climate change and the overworking of the land are consistent themes in Dodd's work. He talks about how a disruption in the growing cycle of mistletoe can affect a whole generation

Reg Dodd, Arabunna people, South Australia, born Finnis Springs Mission, South Australia 1940
Lake Eyre South, 2010, Marree, South Australia
digital photo, dimensions variable
© Reg Dodd

Celia Coulthard



of witchetty grub, whereas some plants such as the bush onion are more resilient and will grow anytime. He's also acutely aware of grazing animals and how they can affect topsoil and distribution of seed.

It's this precious knowledge that he wishes to share through his art.

When asked if he considers himself an environmentalist, Dodd says:

I think I am. All my photos are about the land, how we impact on the land. I would say yes, 'cause that's your upbringing. You realise growing up on the land that if the land is not in prime condition, it's not gonna look after you. It's not gonna look after you if you don't look after it.

Dodd hopes that exhibition visitors will come away with a better understanding of the deep connection between Aboriginal people and the environment, and the way the changing climate and the way we interact with the land are affecting our plants, animals and our future.

Reg Dodd, Arabunna people, South Australia, born Finnis Springs Mission, South Australia 1940
Lake Eyre South, 2010, Marree, South Australia
digital photo, dimensions variable
© Reg Dodd

Wilyarri Ngarrinyalbooroo Boodlanbi Moori: Spirits of our Family

Vera and Jenna Richards

Eliza Wuttke

Wadlada Milingoodoo

Tree of Creation

Vera Richards

Our ancestors want to speak now, on both sides.

Vera Richards

Vera Richards lives and paints alongside the ocean that she loves in Galinyala (Port Lincoln). A Barngarla Woman, her traditional connection to Country spans from the Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast of South Australia on her father's side right through to the Goldfields and Southern Wheatbelt of Western Australia on her mother's. Vera's work is inspired by a passion for her culture, heritage and the Creation Stories passed down by her ancestors. When she puts paint on her brush, it is always to tell a story.

Vera has been wanting to paint these portraits of her family for a long time. 'Without them I wouldn't be here, without all of them', she says. She wanted to do them justice, to put a paintbrush in her hand with intention and to give it everything. Slowly she has been working on building confidence and she feels that now is the time, 'they just wanted to come out'. Vera describes the process of working on this collection as play, jumping from piece to piece, guided by spirit. She works first on an acrylic background before layering oil paint, a new medium for Vera, to re-create the faces of her ancestors.

Vera's collection of portraits features people from both sides of her family. For Vera, family is everything. 'People are losing their family right at this point in time and we are like this because of our families' hardship ... we had to walk this road in order for us to be us, for this story to come out and be told.'

Surrounded by the warm pinks and oranges of the Goldfields are Vera's maternal family. Her mum, Davina Sambo, born in Southern Cross, was one of eight children to Nana Linda Champion (Noongar/Ngaji Ngaji/Balardong) and Poppa William Sambo (Gubran). Granma Elsie Nelson and Poppa Ted Champion, Linda's parents, also feature, as does Davina's brother, Uncle Dennis Sambo. Granny Lucy Sambo, Poppa Cordie Sambo and Broad Arrow Tommy round out this half of the collection. Each of these people has their own stories to tell.

Enveloped in the cool blue tones of the ocean are Vera's father's family. Born in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), Vera's dad, Brenton Richards, was one of seven children born to Nanna Vera Richards (Barngarla/Nauo/Wirangu). Members of the Stolen Generations, Brenton and four of his siblings were taken from his family, and he returned home as a young adult. His resolve to fight for his Country was strong, and he imparted this to Vera and her siblings. Also featured are Nanna Vera's parents, Nanna Lizzie (Elizabeth) Eyles (Barngarla/Nauo) and Pop Fred Richards (Wirangu), alongside Nanna Vera.

For Vera, these portraits and the collaborative piece she has created with her sister Jenna Richards, *From Karlkara to Galinyala*, are about connection to family, Country and spirit. 'We wanted to honour our ancestors who have been taking care of Country [and family] long before we come along.'

Barngarla, Nauo, Wirangu, Gubran and Noongar artist Vera Richards on Country in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025 photo: Nat Rogers



My Mother's Wamu

My Mother's Home

Ngaidya Babirri Yardanha

My Father's Country

Jenna Richards

From Karlkarla to Galingala

From Kalgoorlie to Port Lincoln

Vera and Jenna Richards collaboration

We wanted to tell Mum's story, Dad's story and their families' story. We're all connected – we want to show our deep connection to Country, to community and our family.

Jenna Richards

Working primarily with ink, Jenna Richards creates work that tells the stories of her Country and the interwoven connection between Country, ancestral lineages and songlines. One of seven children of Brenton Richards (Barnjarla/Nauo/Wirangu) and Davina Sambo (Gubran/Noongar/Ngaji Ngaji/Balardong), Jenna was raised on the South Australian coast in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), 'place of sweet water', before moving as a teenager to her mother's Country in the Goldfields of Western Australia. She now lives in Port Lincoln but still holds a special place in her heart for the desert landscapes of Western Australia. 'Even though we've grown up on this side, by the wambiri (coastline), the bush and the desert of our mother's Country, it's still been a very big part of our life, it's still special to our hearts,' she says.

Jenna's large-scale works represent her father's Country, her mother's Country and their coming together.

'Welcome to my Country', excerpt of poem by Jenna Richards

Ngoonidi gamangoodoo ngaidya yardanha
Galgaridni yoor ngaidya yoorari
Wana ngaidya boogininya wilyarri
Ngoogadha ngaidyidnambara
Wana Ngayi yada badnandoodoo yadnagooroo indarri ilgaringoodoo

Nani Yardanha, bana Ngaidya Ngami
Noonggoodoo moonda ibi
Warrbara Ngayi inada ngaidya idnarri dhoorigoo boola yoor
Ngayi nimada bana yoolgoo boolda wabiridao
Bana minaboonoo, bana walbadli, bana walbooridi
Bana badnoodoo ngaidya
Noornbidi yoolda yoolda warda goodyoo

Welcome to my Country
The ancient land of my people
Where my ancestors walked before me
And where I now follow in their footprints
This land, she is My Mother, giver of all life
When I sink my toes in her warm earth, I can feel her heartbeat
It is strong, it is powerful and it is never ending
And it compels me to reconnect with her time and time again

Barnjarla, Nauo, Wirangu, Gubran and Noongar artist
Jenna Richards on Country in Galinyala (Port Lincoln),
South Australia, 2025 photo: Nat Rogers

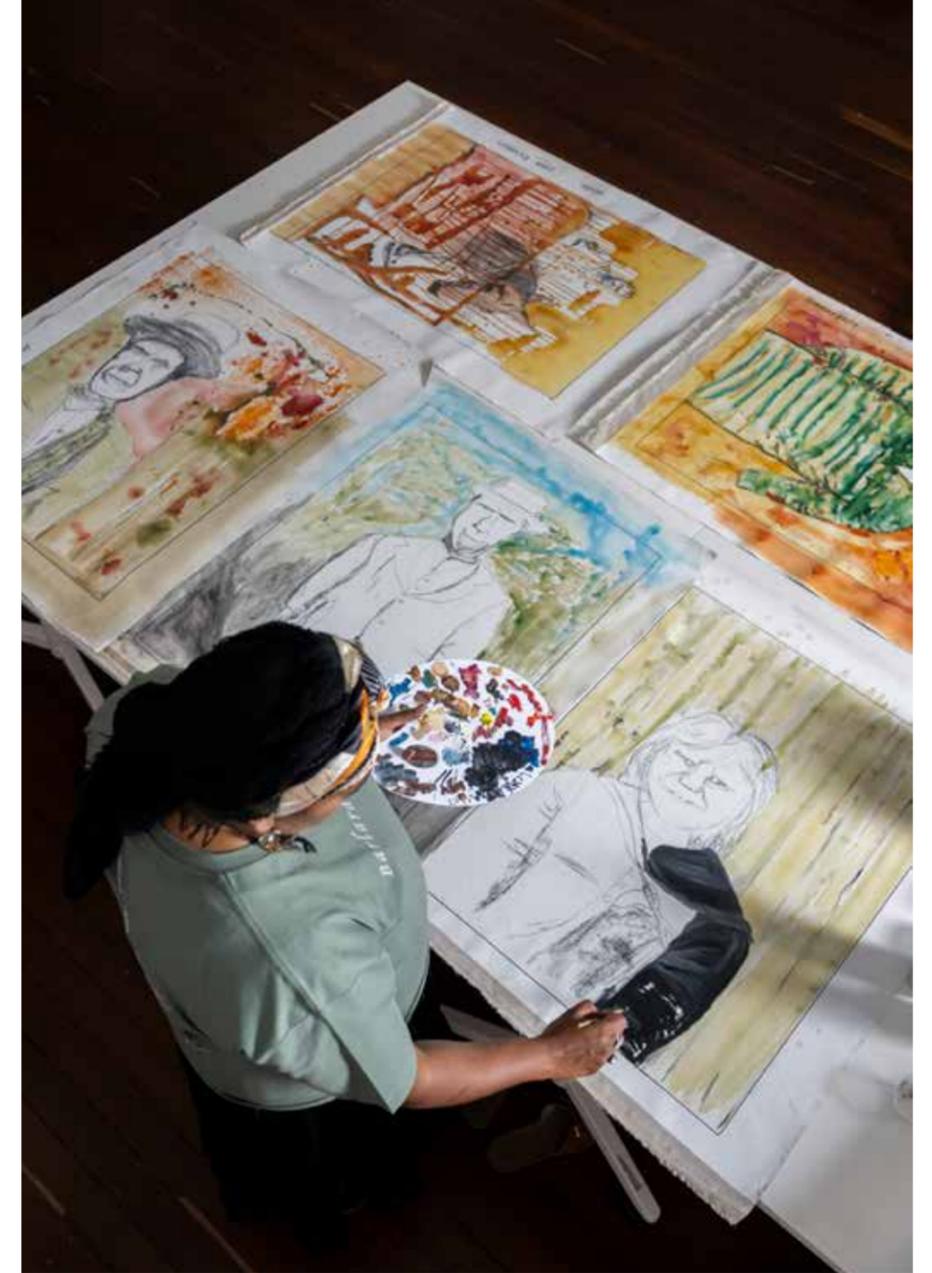




With rich pinks, reds and oranges of Gubran Country, Jenna captures the essence of her mother's home. Using an aerial shot as her guide, Jenna manipulates the ink until it reflects the landscape. In this case, she features her mother's birthplace of Southern Cross and Lake Koorkoordine at the bottom, surrounded by pink, a beautiful representation of Jenna's matriarchal lineage. Towards the top of the painting, the colours shift towards red and orange in the areas surrounding Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Kambalda, the more masculine colours representative of the Country of her grandfather, Poppa William Sambo. Layered on top are symbols of gathering and place, Southern Cross, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Kambalda. Everlastings scatter the landscape, a nod to the Seven Sisters story, a recurring theme in Jenna's work.

Using deep blues, greens and sepia tones, Jenna depicts her father's Country, the land of the Barngarla people. Layered with symbolism, this landscape represents childhood memories and Jenna's home. Jenna's father, Brenton Richards, was a Barngarla Elder and traditional owner of Galinyala, who worked tirelessly to improve conditions for his family and community.

Jenna Richards working on a large-scale ink painting in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers



He imparted to Jenna and her siblings the Barngarla stories of the Tjukurpa, or 'Dreamtime', and these themes feature heavily in Jenna's catalogue of work.

Connecting these two landscapes is a third large-scale piece, *From Karlkarla to Galinyala*, a collaboration between Jenna and her sister Vera. This piece picks up the colours from Jenna's and Vera's individual works to tell the story of who they are and where they come from. It is representative of a trip they took every summer, travelling between Karlkarla (Kalgoorlie) and Galinyala (Port Lincoln), 'Mum's Country to Dad's Country'. Together the sisters aim to capture the stories of their ancestors, the stories of the people and the Country.

We wanted to capture this for Mum, and for family we've lost, for our Dad. It's to honour them, to honour ourselves and our ancestors. We've been here since time immemorial and through our strength and resilience, our descendants and their future descendants will remain connected to this Country for many years to come.

p. 215: Vera Richards painting portraits of her family in the studio in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers

pp. 216-7: Barngarla, Nauo, Wirangu, Gubran and Noongar artists Vera Richards and Jenna Richards on Country in Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers



Akurru

Regina McKenzie

When I was told Aunty Regina McKenzie had picked me to mentor her for Tarnanthi, I knew I'd learn more from her than she would ever be 'mentored' by me. Which is how all good working relationships form, through a synchronicity of thinking, as she says 'outside the box', and listening to each other. Regina is a good storyteller and I listened. I soon realised that all I could hope to achieve was to help spark Regina's joy for making art again amid all her other important busy life.

Aunty Regina has a lot of really good stories from her very courageous life. She is a traditional owner of Kuyani/Adnyamathanha Country in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia, a Kuyani woman living in Yappala. Her work can be seen in the National Museum of Australia, alongside that of her daughter Juanella Donovan, a series of ochre paintings made when Juanella was just eighteen. Regina has a great legacy as a cultural leader and got the world's attention when she successfully campaigned to stop the nuclear waste dump on her Country at Wallerberdina Station.

Regina has a big voice listened to by politicians, lawmakers, mining execs, anthropologists, geologists, family and friends alike. Her power comes from her Elders:

My father is the late Malcolm McKenzie senior, he's a Kuyani/Adnyamathanha man, an Altjawirri (wilyru) Lore man and knowledge keeper. And my mother is Ruth McKenzie, who's from up Eringa, and she's a Luritja/Southern Arrernte. When I used to go up with my aunty, Urngula, she used to teach me sand paintings, tell me stories in the sand, but also my father he'd tell me the storylines. He'd not only tell them but he'd sing them. He introduced me to the relationship we have with the land, how our story is not just a story, it's part of the land and it's in the land.

The story of the land comes to life through envisioning Akurru. As Regina says, 'Akurru is one of the main characters in Kuyani traditional culture. Akurru is not the Rainbow Serpent. Akurru has horns, mane, beard and moustache. It actually looks like a dragon. It is an insult to Akurru to refer then to it as a wubma (snake).' Regina wants to show what Akurru looks like and for people to know it's still here. It's in the waters now and it's in the landforms that it created.

Regina's work of art brings Akurru to life. Her concept to make Akurru as a sculpture in leather is a direct vision to make it alive, most importantly for family. Leather is tactile and understandable as skin of a once living creature. When you look at it, you can feel its presence, like a taxidermied corpse brought to life.

When Regina said she wanted to make Akurru out of leather, I thought of the ruins of the old R.M. Williams workshop, which I was shown when I stayed at Iga Warta in 2005. Adnyamathanha people from Nepabunna Mission worked for Williams in the 1930s, and it is said that they showed him the leather-working techniques that developed the iconic boots, whips and bags. The legacy of the Aboriginal stockmen and their skills is part of the story of the Flinders Ranges.

The way of making this sculpture comes from deep within Regina and reflects her traditional knowledge. Shaping leather like water carriers and using what we now call 'blanket' stitch is how things were made with animal skin forever there. We also had to work out how to make

Talitha Kennedy with Regina McKenzie



the structure of the sculpture, and Regina took to wire with all the fencing tricks her father had taught her.

This sculpture is a new way of working for Regina, but it brings together many of the skills that ring true in the old ways. Making this work of art has involved time talking about Akurru and teaching the next generations who have helped her make it and will see it.

One time when Regina was explaining to me how Akurru looks, she pointed up to a cloud in the sky and said, 'There it is, there's the Akurru'. And so it was, a big singular cloud shape was right in front of us. She directed my gaze to the shape of the body: long serpent-like with a big head and mane, the almond-shaped eye actually had a flaming iris, and horns risings from its head. Akurru was alive and right there for us to see.

Magic things like that kept happening as Regina spun her yarns, sending shivers down my spine. I learnt from Regina that time is immortal, and the wonder of all things ancient comes into being even now.

Luritja/Lower Southern Arrernte and Kuyani/Walpi artist Regina McKenzie working in the studio in Hawker, South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers

Kapi – Water

Patricia Fatt

Patricia Fatt
interview and transcription by Karina Lester

Wai ngayulu ini Patricia-nya.

I am a proud Yankunytjatjara/Kokatha woman and was born at Tarcoola on Kokatha Country in the Far North of South Australia. Tarcoola was a goldmining town and a railway siding for the train travelling to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. My first memories of home were living under a tree on Bon Bon Station, south of Coober Pedy. I lived and moved around the Kingoonya area with my parents and my people, and then later moved to Coober Pedy as a young child. It was there where I spent many years growing up with my family and went to school at the Coober Pedy Area School.

I spent many years with my father's sisters (Aunties), travelling back and forth from Coober Pedy to Port Augusta while my father was working as a fencing contractor. Mum was around in Coober Pedy, but I didn't spend a lot of time with her.

My mother was born on Bulgunnia Station, south of Coober Pedy, where she grew up on Country, learning the old ways. Mum's Country was around the Bulgunnia Station area and Coondambo Station, but she also had ties to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands (APY Lands), at Fregon and Pukatja (Ernabella) Communities. My father was born in Coober Pedy where he grew up, and later he lived and worked in and around the Coober Pedy region, and later around the Kingoonya area as a fencing contractor on the surrounding pastoral properties.

I have lived in Coober Pedy (Opal Country) for most of my life, where I did most of my schooling and did the odd job working with the Community Development Employment Projects. I have many fond memories of Coober Pedy and one of them was noodling, and I enjoyed noodling (sifting) for opal in the early days, trying my luck.

I'm now painting and enjoy painting the Country I grew up in, painting the beautiful colours of Country. My paintings are not of my Wapar (Ancestral stories) but of something that is so precious to Country, kapi – water. Water is vital and a life source in the desert, and through my art I love to paint the creek lines, waterholes and rockholes from my Country. I have been painting for over fifteen years and I love it, it's relaxing and I enjoy it. I have many paintings and some of my early-days paintings were of bush foods and Country – we would travel on Country and go gathering for wangki (wild tomatoes) and camp overnight at the Kan̄ku–Breakaways Conservation Park. At that time it wasn't a conservation park, it was our home, our Country to enjoy. We would gather food and have picnics on Country, walking around and learning from Elders about Country and culture, inma (traditional song) and I would learn my Yankunytjatjara wangka (language) when with my Elders. I have many fond memories of those good old days on Country with my Elders, learning about our Anangu ways.

Today I am painting those memories of my Country, and I hope those who see my paintings enjoy them also.

Yankunytjatjara artist Patricia Fatt in Port Augusta, Nukunu Country, South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers



Sacred Stories Told in Sacred Glass: *Balaridi Barlarri*

Sonja (Jonas) Dare

Sonja (Jonas) Dare and Leda Sivak



Sonja (Jonas) Dare's leadlight work *Balaridi Barlarri* in progress

Sonja (Jonas) Dare is a Barngarla woman on her grandmother's and mother's side and Kokatha and Wirangu on her grandfather's side. Jonas is an artist from South Australia, whose interdisciplinary visual works of art – including digital media, photography, paint, filmmaking and now leadlight – explore socio-cultural, environmental and political issues affecting Aboriginal people.

I am of this Country, and I have a responsibility and an obligation to look after it. I do part of that through my art. Our art is our tjukurra – our songlines, our culture, our law, ourselves. Our paintings are documents of our land rights, the title deeds for our culture and our land past, present and future.

Jonas's striking glass work *Balaridi Barlarri* weaves a rich narrative, grounded in Barngarla tradition. Embracing sacred narratives and iconography, her work reflects on Barngarla connection with Country and culture in the context of both Aboriginal and Western sites of sacredness.

At a spiritual level, *Balaridi Barlarri* (balaridi meaning to shine, be lighted, enlightened; and Barlarri being the Barngarla word both for 'women' and for the star cluster Pleiades) depicts the tjukurra of the Seven Sisters as they travelled through Barngarla Country in South Australia. On their journey, the Seven Sisters camped at many places and built shelters and windbreaks. When there was plenty of food and water available, the eldest sister would teach her sisters songs and inmas (dances) for Barngarla Country. The songs enabled the sisters to successfully navigate Barngarla Country. They were able to read the landscape and find water, food and shelter. The songs and inmas also helped to keep the sisters safe during their travels.

At a socio-political level, manifesting this sacred Aboriginal story using the medium of leadlight places Barngarla spirituality into dialogue with spaces sacred within Western cultures, where leadlight and stained glass are so frequently used in sites of worship. Valued and protected within Western sites of worship, leadlight windows speak to the sacred. While Aboriginal art is increasingly embraced by mainstream Australia, this is sometimes motivated by a recognition of the commercial value rather than an appreciation of the spiritual dimensions of Aboriginal works of art.

At a practical level, the artist needed to overcome a childhood-learned fear of the dangers of broken glass to make this work. As each line is scored with the blade and the glass is snapped, slices and splinters burst into the workspace. Sharp shards sometimes shatter. Thus, this work reflects a tension between the desired and the dangerous.

At a symbolic level, this piece represents the building of beauty from brokenness. In the medium of leadlight, the glass must be broken to make something new, transforming the shattered. Fragments connect and unite to become a new whole. Drab and featureless in the darkness, the dormant images emerge only when illuminated. Vibrant new stories unfold, revealed by luminous light.

Jonas Dare's work is a testament to transformation, resilience and the enduring spirit of culture. This multifaceted meditation on intercultural sacredness is actualised and enlivened by illumination, by light.

Artist Sonja (Jonas) Dare
photo: Dave Laslett



Muda

Roy Coulthard

Marika Davies

Uncle Roy Coulthard OAM is an Adnyamathanha Elder living on Nukunu Country. He is recognised as the master woodcarver of the Flinders Ranges in South Australia.

Using skills and knowledge handed down from his father and grandfather before him, Uncle Roy has carved and smoothed the same wood as they used, keeping Muda strong. Muda (ancestral beliefs and stories) is present when he works the wood.

Uncle Roy is now handing down this ancient practice to his grandson Tyron, who is just as keen to learn as Uncle Roy is to teach. They sit side by side talking about the wood, where to find the best types, what it looks like, and how it might show up throughout the process of the carving. It makes Uncle Roy happy to know that Muda will continue in his family line now he has retired from carving. But retirement doesn't stop the endless conversations between Uncle Roy, Tyron and Tyron's wife Tisharni as they look ahead. Carving, family, tradition, Muda are interconnected in their past and now their future.

Uncle Roy has led workshops around the community in Port Augusta and surrounding areas, guiding other woodcarvers, including myself, to bring back a forgotten skill that has lain dormant since colonisation. Many of these artists have moved on and are curating some of the best woodcarving in Australia.

As you sit with Uncle Roy, he is only too happy to tell you the stories of long ago, how his family would pick up their cotton bags that once used to hold flour, now filled with tools for carving. Adnyamathanha people used to walk out onto Country and, after collecting the wood, they would make a fire and sit to make artefacts. He remembers as a child he could look out over the landscape at night and see the orange glow from the fires and hear singing in Adnyamathanha language as they made their carvings. These were old-ways stories being sung in language by the firelight overnight, and in the morning they would walk back carrying their flour bags, filled with their tools and carvings. These are old memories of a man, himself now old, who has given so much to others, helping them to understand the wood and to look beyond it – to see their ancestors in the movement of their hands and to hold their culture as they shape the wood. Uncle Roy keeps talking and then, pausing, sits quietly at the table as if he is that young boy watching out over the landscape looking for the firelight.

Uncle Roy is always keen to go out looking for wood or talk about carving. In our conversations we would always think about what types of wood there are out there, remembering we once had a chat about an American wood I had heard about that turns blue on the inside after a fire. We would talk for a long time about different woods that we would like to see and to smell. Watching Uncle Roy on Country, I see his movement between the trees as old in itself, deep-rooted in time and culture, as he does what his forebears did – picking the right piece to carve what he can see, only to be revealed to others once he's finished carving.

His knowledge of carving, timeless and grounded in Muda, is something that no classroom with four walls can ever teach.

Adnyamathanha artist Roy Coulthard in Port Augusta, Nukunu Country, South Australia, 2025
photo: Nat Rogers





Tarnanthi
Partner exhibitions

Troy-Anthony Baylis
 Patrick William Carter
 Dylan Crismani

Adam-Troy Francis
 Libby Harward
 r e a

Rewriting Landscapes offers a departure from entrenched visual traditions, inviting viewers to witness contemporary Aboriginal artists boldly reclaiming and re-inscribing the representation of Country through the mediums of photography and video.

The historical canon of ‘landscape art’ has often been a fraught terrain, laden with colonial implications of discovery and possession, just as the history of the concept of landscape itself in so-called Australia is undeniably tied to experiences of dispossession, trauma and grief.

Rewriting Landscapes offers a lively counterpoint to canonical landscape art, dismantling and reconstructing art history from an Aboriginal perspective. Showcasing how contemporary Aboriginal art can powerfully redirect the gaze, the artists in this exhibition use contemporary and experimental visual language to articulate deep-seated sovereign perspectives.

In our age of ubiquitous image-making, photography and video become, in the hands of these artists, potent tools for deconstruction, interrogation and reimagination, offering courageous, curious, and at times even playful new frames for seeing and understanding Country.

What does it mean to truly perceive – and represent – a landscape beyond its surface aesthetics? *Rewriting Landscapes* asks but doesn’t attempt to answer this question, offering instead a collection of photographic and videographic works that articulate Country as a sentient, storied and living entity, challenging viewers to engage with a profoundly First Nations visual epistemology.

These contemporary works are not simply reactions to colonial narratives but are powerful, self-determined expressions which tackle and re-present the familiar concept of ‘the figure in the landscape’. The artists are the authors of their own stories, the photographers of their own images, filming themselves or their mob on their own Country. They use modern mediums to convey timeless connections and articulate contemporary realities. The rewriting here is an act of empowerment, a confident assertion of presence and (reoriented) perspective.

Rewriting Landscapes underscores the dynamism and adaptability of contemporary Aboriginal art as cultural expression, and celebrates continuously living culture and kinetic storytelling. By embracing photography and video, these artists demonstrate an adventurous spirit, forging new artistic pathways while remaining deeply connected to ancestral knowledge. Their works are not a eulogy for a lost past, but a vibrant testament to a living, evolving heritage, shared in contemporary form.

In these forward-looking narratives, artists are crafting visions of Country that are resilient, vivid and imbued with continuity and hope. As acts of profound artistic and cultural agency, these works turn the lens onto classical representations, innovatively re-inscribing First Nations ways of seeing, being and doing onto the very fabric of how landscape is seen and understood. They reshape and enrich our collective visual understanding of the bush, the desert, the mountains and the beach as complex and all-encompassing ancestral and metaphysical systems. These works of art can be seen as beacons, projecting from the shadows of colonial visual legacies to illuminate pathways to shared understanding and deep respect for First Nations perspectives.

Danni Zuvela

pp. 226-7: *Bound/Unbound Collective, Sovereign Acts – Act II*, 2015, performance and projection, State Library of South Australia, North Terrace cultural precinct
 photo: Steve Rendoulis

p. 229, still: Libby Harward, Ngugi/Quandamooka people, southeast Queensland, born Brisbane 1976
Waribul Wayira (Hungry Waterways), 2020, Mulgumpin, Lake Carrurra, Queensland
 digital video, 2 minutes, 43 seconds
 © Libby Harward
 photo: Libby Harward and Micah Ruedin



Country Arts SA

Temeika Campbell
Zemiah Campbell
Carly Tarkari Dodd
Tiarnie Edwards
Debra Rankine

Elizabeth Rankine
Sonya Rankine
Bessie Rigney
Stephanie Russell

Sandra Saunders
Betty Sumner
Margi Sumner
Ellen Trevorrow

Kumarangk is a home
a home to animals, birds, to flowing waters
a home to sacred stories that have been spoken and sung from one
woman's mouth to another woman's ear
it's a living archive of memories
every cell within reeds and leaves
every life and death held and remembered
women's place
women's story and knowledge
the Ngarrindjeri women know their Country
they know their stories, they know their truths
Kumarangk is sacred

Kumarangk is an intergenerational love letter for Ngarrindjeri women, an exhibition that explores the survival of culture and the resistance to colonial destruction.

Through a series of paintings and wireworks, artist Aunty Sandra Saunders retells the story of the building of the bridge to Kumarangk (colonially known as hindmarsh island). The creation of these works was a way for Saunders to reclaim the narrative of the controversy and tell the story from a Ngarrindjeri woman's point of view. The works are a continuous act of resistance, refusing to remain silent in the face of such public scrutiny. Aunty Sandra's collection will be re-exhibited alongside a newly commissioned piece that speaks to the future of the controversy and the ongoing resistance of Ngarrindjeri women.

Through her teaching, Aunty Ellen Trevorrow has helped to establish a large network of Ngarrindjeri weavers, keeping this vital tradition alive for future generations. Recently Aunty Ellen joined a multidisciplinary art collective called Mardawi. The collective is made up of a strong group of Ngarrindjeri artists, including Elizabeth Rankine, Margi Sumner, Temeika Campbell, Bessie Rigney, Zemiah Campbell, Debra Rankine and Stephanie Russell. The women meet weekly in Murray Bridge and focus on large sculptural woven forms. Mardawi's work centres on unique Ngarrindjeri cultural and lived experiences, and is the embodiment of community-created art practice.

Sonya Rankine has established herself as one of the most prominent and prolific Ngarrindjeri weavers in the South Australian arts community. Through her business, Lakun Mara, Sonya offers weaving workshops and a jewellery and accessories line. She is a highly regarded visual artist who has exhibited at the Art Gallery of South Australia and JamFactory and as part of the Tarnanthi Festival. She was recognised with the 2021 SA NAIDOC Artist of the Year award and the 2019 Our Mob Emerging Artist Prize.



Utilising the traditional Ngarrindjeri weaving stitch, Carly Dodd creates bold experimental soft sculptures that reinterpret and challenge the notion of 'traditional' art. Both an arts worker and visual artist, Carly has been establishing herself as someone to watch by being shortlisted for the 2025 Rigg Design Prize, the 2024 National Indigenous Fashion Awards and the 2023 MAKE craft design award.

Tiarnie Edwards is a ceramics artist whose work explores themes of radical protest and Aboriginal resistance. Currently a part of the APY Art Centre Collective as a studio assistant and artist, Tiarnie has been carving out a presence in the Adelaide art scene with their work. A bold emerging artist with a strong voice and vision.

ACE and Country Arts SA are proud to bring the *Kumarangk* exhibition to life, to showcase not just the incredible work of these twelve artists but also to remind audiences of the power of Ngarrindjeri Mi:minar (Ngarrindjeri Women).

Sandra Saunders, Ngarrindjeri/Boandik people,
South Australia, born Millicent, South Australia 1947
Nature's Justice, 2025, Port Lincoln, South Australia
oil on hardboard, 130.0 x 75.0 cm
© Sandra Saunders
photo: Nat Rogers

Dominic Guerrera

Kat Bell

Trevor Nickolls

This exhibition curated by Kat Bell is a conversation across time. It explores the legacy of groundbreaking Aboriginal artist Trevor Nickolls through innovative contemporary interpretations by Bell, presented in a fusion of physical and digital mediums.

Bell, a Gudjal and Girramay artist and curator, blends painting and sculptures with new-media technologies to create immersive representations of First Nations stories and cultural narratives. Her curatorial approach integrates interactive digital elements to deepen audience engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

The exhibition features original works by Nickolls, alongside interpretative pieces by Bell, incorporating augmented reality (AR), animation and moving-image art. Bell also presents new original paintings and sculptures inspired by Nickolls's distinctive artistic style and use of symbols, unusual objects and futuristic themes.

Often referred to as the 'father of urban Aboriginal art', Nickolls (1949–2012) created powerful visual statements reflecting pivotal moments in colonial engagement and using complex iconography with multiple layers of meaning. His early friendship with Warlpiri artist Dinny Nolan and the political activism surrounding the Aboriginal Tent Embassy fuelled his artistic motivation, leading to works such as *Deaths in Custody*, 1990, and later *Brush with the Lore*, 2010.¹

In his pursuit to bridge the contemporary and traditional, Nickolls developed the concept of 'Dreamtime to Machinetime' to articulate the cultural transition that people navigate when moving from a traditional life into a mechanised, technology-driven world, which he often depicted as dystopian. Nickolls's works of art explore the tensions and interactions between these two realms, highlighting the challenges First Nations people face in balancing cultural identity within Australian society.

Bell builds on these themes, using new media to explore how Nickolls's vision of cultural transition can inform contemporary First Nations storytelling. Her curatorial lens invites audiences to engage with Nickolls's legacy through their own eyes – and smartphones – bridging past, present and future.

The exhibition also includes Birrala Nyina sessions, or Sit-Down Talks, hosted by Bell. These yarnning circles invite audiences to reflect on Nickolls's art, Bell's curatorial practice and the evolving role of digital media in First Nations storytelling, fostering dialogue and cultural understanding.

Nickolls's artistic influence spanned the world. Through the 1980s and 1990s, his art was included in seminal international exhibitions, which, history shows, have had a profound effect on the promotion and acceptance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art as a significant contemporary art movement in the world.² He and Rover Thomas were the first Aboriginal artists to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale, in 1990. In the same year, Nickolls's art featured on the cover of *Time* magazine's Australian edition, alongside the headline 'Black art breaks into a white world: boomtime for Aboriginal painting'.³

Spanning works from the 1970s to the 2010s, the exhibition highlights key themes in Nickolls's practice, including his iconic 'Dreamtime to Machinetime' concept, and offers a shared storytelling experience shaped by two visionary artists.

Kat Bell and Angelika Tyrone

Trevor Nickolls, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia, born Adelaide 1949, died Adelaide 2012
Urban Scream, c.1993, Adelaide
 synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 75.2 × 59.5 cm
 © Trevor Nickolls, courtesy of AIARTS Gallery
Overlay of Augmented Reality by Kat Bell, Gudjal/Girramay people, Queensland, born Mural (Charters Towers), Queensland 1975
 2025, Riverland, South Australia
 digital media- augmented reality, 75.2 × 59.5 cm
 © Trevor Nickolls and Kat Bell, courtesy of AIARTS Gallery
 photo: Kat Bell

1 *Deaths in Custody* is in the National Gallery of Australia's collection; *Brush with the Lore* is in the Art Gallery of South Australia's collection.

2 Wally Caruana, catalogue essay for AIARTS Gallery exhibition *Trevor Nickolls: look both ways: Dreamtime to Machinetime*, Adelaide, November 2010, unpublished.

3 *Time*, Australian edition, vol. 5, no. 29, 16 July 1990, cover. The featured painting was Nickolls's *Inside Looking Out*, 1987, held in the National Gallery of Australia's collection.



APY Art Centre Collective

Myarn Alden
 Pearl Austin
 Tanya Burton
 Naomi Douglas

Tiarnie Edwards
 Myra Kumantjara
 Megan Lyons
 Rachel Lyons

Josina Pumani
 Eileen Stanley
 Leshaye Swan

Within the ever-changing landscape of contemporary Australian art, the next generation of First Nations emerging artists are carving culture and knowledge into Australian galleries and arts spaces. *Generation Next* brings together up-and-coming First Nations artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, regional South Australia and Adelaide to showcase the vast talent and diversity of First Nations art, culture, identity and storytelling. The breadth of artists included in the exhibition foregrounds the importance of spaces anchored in culture and held by First Nations peoples.

Anangu leaders working from the APY Art Centre Collective have laid the foundations for a cultural hub, which invites First Nations artists from various Nations and language groups to tell their stories through their artistic practices, creating cross-cultural exchanges of stories, truth and ever-growing relationships.

Generation Next showcases works in a variety of mediums, including paintings and ceramics, through which artists relate stories of themselves and their homes. Country features in various works, examined through artists' individualistic lenses. From depictions of wild desert flowers to ancestral stories, all the works reflect a deep sense of self within a cultural context, created by people from diverse landscapes and with unique cultural knowledge.

One of the featured artists is Leshaye Swan, a Yankunytjatjara woman and emerging ceramicist, who was born in Alice Springs and brought to Mimili in the APY Lands by her grandmother, Sandra Pumani, a fellow artist and respected Anangu leader. Leshaye's ceramics practice is grounded in her fond memories of growing up in Mimili, particularly going out bush and exploring with her Elders, Kunmanara (Milatjari) Pumani and Kunmanara (Ngupulya) Pumani. 'We would go out and they would teach me about traditional life', she says.

Leshaye learnt to weave, make punu (wooden works) and hunt for witchetty grubs and bush medicines. Her ceramic forms reflect the beauty of Mimili, a place rich in wildflowers and bush tucker, which she grew up exploring with Elders. The large scale of the works invites viewers themselves to explore the landscape through these forms, a way to transport the beauty of the APY Lands into the urban landscape of Adelaide.

Another artist in the exhibition is Megan Lyons, who is from Amata in the APY Lands, and now resides in Adelaide, where she raises her children and paints. Megan comes from a long line of painters and storytellers. Her grandfather was the celebrated painter Tiger Palpatja and her father, Sammy Lyons, was a respected senior man and artist at Tjala Arts in Amata.

I paint *Ngayuku Tjamuku Tjukurpa (My Grandfather's Story)*. This story is about wati kutjara (two men) and minyma kutjara (two women). They lived together, these two brothers and two sisters. They would change into all different animals on different days, like emu, eagle, kangaroo. At last, the older brother said 'let's change into Wanampi (water snakes)'. The younger brother said 'we should go up to the sky' but the older brother said 'wiya (no), it's not safe up there'. So instead, they went under the ground and they made a big creek, all the way to a big waterhole – called Piltati – and they stayed there.

Tiarnie Edwards

Megan Lyons, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1990
Ngayuku Tjamuku Tjukurpa (My Grandfather's story), 2024, Adelaide
 synthetic polymer paint on linen, 196.0 x 180.0 cm
 © Megan Lyons and APY Art Centre Collective



Zaachariaha Fielding with the APY Art Centre Collective

Zaachariaha Fielding
 Nyunmiti Burton
 Yaritji Heffernan
 Jennifer Ingkatji

Megan Lyons
 Sandra Pumani
 Margaret Richards
 Yaritji Tingila Young

Zaachariaha Fielding's reputation precedes him: a commanding performer, radiant and assured, his voice rising with clarity and force – somewhere between earth and sky. As one half of Electric Fields – a duo who meld sound, language and movement with emotional precision – Fielding is magnetic. That presence carries into the artist's studio. There's a hum beneath the surface of his paintings. A sense of rhythm. Movement. Each mark a gesture. Each composition a kind of song.

In recent years, Fielding has developed a visual art practice that is grounded, intuitive and deeply personal. For him, painting is not a departure from music but a continuation: another way to hold story, memory and connection to Country through rhythm and repetition. But this practice did not begin in isolation. It began – fittingly – with stillness.

When the world slowed down in 2020, Fielding was meant to be on the road. Electric Fields had been preparing for a major international tour, including a headline slot at the SXSW music festival in Austin, Texas. But with borders closed and stages silent, he turned inward. Painting began as a quiet, reflective act. Four years later, he found himself in the US after all – in Los Angeles, just steps from the Chateau Marmont hotel – this time not to sing but to exhibit a solo show of paintings at Albertz Benda gallery.

That shift – towards stillness, process and place – sits at the heart of *Purkarari: Slow down*. 'Purkarari' is a Pitjantjatjara word describing the calm that settles in through work: a clarity, a quietening of the body and mind. For Fielding, this feeling emerges most powerfully in the APY Art Centre Collective studio, where he paints alongside the senior women. 'I always feel the strongest when I am with them', he says. 'This exhibition is a celebration of our interconnectedness and our work'.

Purkarari: Slow down brings together major new solo works by Fielding, a collaborative work of art with Yaritji Tingila Young, and a large-scale canvas made with artists Sandra Pumani, Nyunmiti Burton, Jennifer Ingkatji, Yaritji Heffernan, Margaret Richards and Megan Lyons. Their presence is felt not just in the paintings themselves but in how they are made: with slowness, respect, humour and deep cultural knowledge. 'These women guide and support me and the other young artists', Fielding says. 'Art-making keeps me connected to my family, my Elders and myself'.

Alongside these collaborations, Fielding's solo practice continues to evolve. In 2023, he won the Wynne Prize for landscape painting and the People's Choice Award in the Ramsay Art Prize – affirming both critical and public recognition. His process remains physical and instinctive: painting with acrylics on linen, often using needle-tip paint applicators with surgical precision, each work layered with repeated gestures.

Artists Zaachariaha Fielding, Yaritji Heffernan and Sandra Pumani at APY Art Centre Collective, Adelaide, 2023
 photo: Cara O'Dowd



And yet, the music never stopped. Electric Fields continues to captivate audiences – from WOMADelaide to Eurovision – with a sound that is expansive, genre-defying and rooted in language and spirit. That Fielding moves fluently between performance and painting speaks to a practice that is both grounded and multidimensional.

Most recently, Fielding and his musical partner Michael Ross were awarded the Key to the City of Adelaide – the city's highest honour – coinciding with the tenth anniversary of Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO City of Music. That Electric Fields formed in the same year feels more than coincidental. Both have grown in step, helping to reshape how and where music lives in the city.

Purkarari: Slow down brings these threads together. The works in this exhibition – made slowly, made together – invite the viewer to do the same. To pause. To observe. To tune into a rhythm shaped by Country, kinship and care. It is not a story of reinvention but of return.

Rebecca Freezer

Zaachariaha Fielding, Yankunytjatjara people,
South Australia, born Port Augusta, South Australia 1991
Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people,
South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu
Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1956
Tjungu (Together), 2023, Adelaide
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 200.0 x 248.0 cm
© the artists and the APY Art Centre Collective
photo: Andy Francis



Janette Murrungun

Janette Murrungun's work is an exciting illustration of what has been emerging from the small community of Numbulwar, in southeastern Arnhem Land on the Gulf of Carpentaria. These colourful fibre works represent what I call 'Numbulwar style'. Janette is purposeful in her selection of materials and creation of forms and intricate details as she builds a narrative. Her exhibition *Yirr* has many stories to tell about past life in the community, its current state and its future.

Recently Janette has been involved in a project to reconnect members of the community with the material culture legacy that is found in museums. One of the aspirations of this endeavour is to properly identify the works by their name and, when possible, by the creator, giving them agency within those institutions and in the community. Objects are being discovered that provide a backbone and a path for the work being created now in Numbulwar and exhibited in *Yirr*.

Yirr is not only the title of this collection of works but it is the word for a string bag in Wubuy, the language used by Nunggubuyu people. String bags are made across Arnhem Land and in the past were part of a woman's basic set of belongings – very much like the totes that most women carry today to hold a variety of contents. Janette said: 'In it, we used to carry seafood, crabs, mussels, pepe (shells), lonbom, lily roots and bush food'. From historical collections, mainly from the mission at Rose River in Numbulwar, there are bags made from string spun from yarrowu (kurrajong) and/or minyarr (acacia). The Dutch anthropologist Alex van der Leeden made a collection of objects, including yirr, from the mission in 1963. Some of these could have been made by Janette's mother and grandmother.

Although Janette has not seen these early bags or ones made by her grandmother, her inspiration for making yirr comes from ones that her grandmother Nimanja Manggurra made from minyarr. 'When I found out, I asked my mother [Mawungumain Nundhirbala] to show me a string bag, and I fell in love with this object', she said. The bags are made by looping a continuous string. Horizontal bands of colour are created by dyeing the fibre before it is spun into the string.

Janette's work in *Yirr* includes some of these classic string bags and yirr made from ghost net material, which has been washing up on the beaches in the Gulf for years. The nets and ropes in vibrant colours are known as nanja. For a variety of reasons, the artists at Numbulwar Numburindi Arts have taken on the challenge of transforming this raw material into their works of art. I propose that one factor in choosing this material is its vibrant colour, which in turn has become part of the Numbulwar style. The use of contrasting vivid colours and materials is not a new thing, as there are yirr from 1935 that are made totally from bright wool, part of the Donald Thomson collection held by the University of Melbourne. This wool was most likely repurposed from European clothing and then respun into string and made into the bags. This is the same process that Janette uses with the ghost net material: ropes are meticulously destranded and then selected strands are spun to make new plastic string.

These works fit the relational concept of yin and yang, one half being the yirr made from ghost net material and the other from natural fibres. They seem to be a dichotomy of conflicting ideas – handspun string and plastic – yet in Janette's work these are actually complementary. They



Janette Murrungun, Nunggubuyu people, Northern Territory, born Numbulwar, Northern Territory 1958
Yirr, 2025, yellow and pink, and green ghost net material,
 75.0 × 18.5 cm, 61.0 × 16.0 cm
 © the artist
 photo: Tim Avice and courtesy Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

interact and influence each other. Natural fibres find their way in among the plastic ones, old forms are made new with nanja.

The current environmental impact of plastics in the water and on the beaches may not be eliminated by their use by artists, but Janette and others are drawing attention to the impact and, at the same time, are incorporating this material into their creative repertoire.

Louise Hamby

Dominic Guerrera
 Jayda Wilson
 Dameeli Coates

Second Skin

And there I was
 crying at dust
 fucking red dirt
 in it
 and on it
 the kind that is so fine it sticks
 to you
 and everything
 like a fine film of second skin
 so dry it floats
 and traces of it linger for years
 in hidden secret spots
 like your own personal static.

Dameeli Coates, 2024

Creation stories can travel all around Australia, the world, and up into the stars. There is no doubt that your Aboriginality stays with you when you move, so what does movement mean for Country and identity?

Dr Mary Graham, a Kombumerri and Wakka Wakka person, says the obligation and centrality of land as the moral identity and custodial ethic for Aboriginal Peoples does not change, no matter what happens to us through urbanisation and other policy-related impacts. So how do we fulfil those obligations and maintain relationships in an ever-moving world and culture?

Yarta Ngura is a collaborative process of exploring movement and Country, home and protocols and of negotiating relationships across borders and between belongings. It centres and prioritises creating space for conversations between Aboriginal people, something much needed in our communities.

For the exhibition, Kurna-based artists Dominic Guerrera (Kurna and Ngarrindjeri) and Jayda Wilson (Wirangu and Gugada), with Dameeli Coates (Wakka Wakka) as curator, have produced a text-based response to this discussion with each other.

Dameeli Coates

Dominic Guerrera, Kurna/Ngarrindjeri people,
 South Australia, born Kurna Yarta (Adelaide),
 South Australia 1983
Native Page, 2025, Kurna Yarta (Adelaide)
 digital print, 29.7 × 42.0 cm
 © Dominic Guerrera

THERE AIN'T NO LEFT
 THERE AIN'T NO RIGHT

IT'S ALL GAMMON
 ALL FOREIGN
 ALL WHITE

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 K

Nici Cumpston
Zena Cumpston
David Doyle

Kent Morris
Adrienne Semmens
Raymond Zada

The *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* exhibition began with a conversation in 2020. Georgia Cribb and Penny Teale approached Barkandji artist and curator Nici Cumpston to offer an opportunity to present a solo exhibition at Bunjil Place Gallery. Upon seeing the impressive scale of the Gallery, Nici instead suggested the idea of working alongside her sister Zena Cumpston to co-curate and to realise a long-held ambition to collectively create a group exhibition with fellow Barkandji/Barkindji artists.

Prior to this project the artists were known to each other, having professional relationships forged through past projects, and with several also related through family connection. Through conversations over many years, the group had expressed a desire to work on 'something' together, as Barkandji/Barkindji artists, and particularly to spend time together on Ancestral homelands.

The starting point for the development of the exhibition was simply the foregrounding of including Country as an active participant. As Aboriginal people living in a colonised circumstance, it is not often that we can dictate the terms upon which we wish to create and collaborate. Being supported to work in a culturally grounded way without considering the sometimes stifling parameters of 'project outcomes' is a rarity. With no specific premise for the show set, the group, and importantly all our wonderful collaborators and supporters at Bunjil Place Gallery and NETS Victoria, placed great trust in our process. We were supported to set off on several journeys to come together with and on our Ancestral homelands, visiting and spending time at multiple significant cultural landscapes within our Barkandji/Barkindji Country in far west New South Wales. Planning and executing these trips was often challenging, with Adrienne Semmens, Raymond Zada and Nici residing on Kurna Country in Adelaide, Zena on Wurundjeri Country in Melbourne, Kent Morris on Yalukit Willam Country in Melbourne, and David Doyle on Wilyakali Country in Broken Hill. Juggling to navigate busy schedules, work and family commitments, over a twelve-month period we managed to come together for three trips collectively, and then separately each of the artists did at least one additional trip to Country as part of our *ngaratya* project. In between these trips, the artists regularly met online together and with our project partners, while also participating in several public talks to share our progress and journey.

While we began this journey with no known destination, we trusted that Country, our Mother, would show us the way. Being together on our Barkandji/Barkindji Country gave each of us precious time to strengthen and build our knowledge, our cultural connection and especially to deepen our relationships with each other and our Barkandji/Barkindji community. Being on and with Country gave us all we needed to develop the concepts and to go. She held and nurtured us, drew us closer together and guided when we were unsure. Each of the artists has made work that conveys their love and passion for our people, for our Ancestors, for our culture, for our Country.

We have been blown away by the support and trust of our non-Aboriginal collaborators. We were empowered to work in a way that followed no linear path but made sense to us culturally and honoured our ways of seeing, being and doing. By making room for us to work



Installation view featuring *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* at Bunjil Place Gallery, Victoria, 2023
photo: Christian Capurro



in this culturally grounded way, which foregrounded journeys and connecting more than any 'destinations', we were able to create works of art that powerfully connect to one another and telegraph important narratives to a wide audience.

This show was made with love and care because we made it to honour our people, our culture and our Country. Through the exhibition and particularly its title, we warmly welcome you to come together with us, to connect with, to nurture and to advocate for Country.

Nici Cumpston and Zena Cumpston, sisters and co-curators

This essay is an abridged version of the project's 2023 curators' foreword. www.ngaratya.com.au

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together) is a Bunjil Place Gallery exhibition, curated by Nici Cumpston and Zena Cumpston, touring with NETS Victoria. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program and received development assistance from NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund, supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

The project's co-curator and participating artist Nici Cumpston is also Artistic Director of Tarnanthi at the Art Gallery of South Australia. AGSA has included *ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)* in Tarnanthi 2025 because of its artistic merit as a significant collective Barkandji/ Barkindji project.

left to right: Artists Adrienne Semmens, Nici Cumpston, Raymond Zada, Zena Cumpston, Kent Morris and David Doyle at Mutawintji, Barkandji/Barkindji Country, 2022
photo: Raymond Zada

Zena Cumpston, Barkandji people, born Canberra 1974
ngarta-kiira (to return to Country) #1, 2023 Melbourne, Wurundjeri Country
linocut collage and kopi on Fabriano paper, 76.0 x 56.0 cm
© the artist
photo: Christian Capurro



Iwiri Arts

Tjutjuna Paul Andy
Kanytjupai Baker
Audrey Brumby
Nurina Burton
Amanda Daegar
Carolyn Dunn

Mahalia Levai
Mona Lewis
Renaë Nelson
Ruth Nelson
Janice Stanley

Marilyn Stanley
Renita Stanley
Janet Tjitayi
Katrina Tjitayi
Tjimpuna Williams

Inuntji-inuntji (bush flowers) are the focus of the exhibition *Piriyakutu* by Iwiri artists. Bush flowers are significant features of the landscape. Importantly, with their brilliant and delicate colours, they are entangled in culture and everyday life as a seasonal signifier. Audrey Brumby reflects on how she relates to the flowers on her home country around Ernabella.

Inuntji-inuntji

Uwa, kuwarila wangkanyi panya piriyakututjara. Nyangatja panya kuljinka kuwaripatjara, walpa pulkatjara. Ka ara nyangangka uwankara kampa kutjuparipai, taljinka, puŋjinka, ngura uwankarangka. Ka tjuŋpun-tjuŋpunpa tjuŋa pakalpai, munu ulŋukunpa wiru tjuŋa munu tjuratja tjuŋa kulpa pulji pulka tjuŋangka, panya Musgrave Ranges-ta. Pulji katu. Nyangatja inuntji ara, panya wanari tjuŋa inuntjitjara ngaranyangka. Kala nyakula kulini, 'Ai, tjuŋguru tjaŋa manti ngarinyi.' Nganaŋa inuntji nyakula nintjinka kulilpai. Ka parkilypa puupulpa tjuŋa mantangka ngaripai pulangkita purunypa. Ka irmangka-irmangka kulpa nganaŋa mantjilpai ara nyangangka, munula miritjina palyalpai. Ka tjuŋguru Anangu kutjupa kata pika ngarinyi, tjuŋguru tjaŋa pika, tjuŋguru warungku kampanytja. Ka palulanguru nganaŋa irmangka-irmangka tjunanyi palyaringkuntjaku. Ka mingkulpa! Nganaŋa pulawa piranpa tjuŋa puŋungka nyakula nintjinka kulini, 'Munta uwa! Mingkulpa panya ririringanyi kapingku puyinnyangka maŋangka!' Nyanganpa uwankara ngaranyi ara nyangangka, panya piriyakutu.

We are talking about piriyakutu. It's the time before kuljinka (the hot season), a warm windy time. There is movement all around. In the sand dunes, in the bush, everywhere. The tjuŋpun-tjuŋpunpa (desert flowers) are growing. Ulŋukunpa, the pink and orange flowers, are coming up, and all the other sweet foods too. Coming up everywhere in the pulji pulka tjuŋa, the Musgrave Ranges. Up in the mountains there. We call this time inuntji. The time when the acacias are blossoming. We see the yellow flowers and think, 'Hey, there are probably honey ants to be had!' They are ready when we see the yellow flowers there. Parkilypa are the purple flowers. They cover the manta (red earth) in a purple blanket. Irmangka-irmangka is harvested around this time too. We use irmangka-irmangka to make bush medicine. If someone has a sore head, sore back or warungku kampanytja (a burn from a fire), we can use the irmangka-irmangka to heal them. And mingkulpa! When the little white flowers grow on top of the mingkulpa (bush tobacco), we think 'Of course! The mingkulpa is ready after the rains.' All of this happens around piriyakutu.

Audrey Brumby translation by **Dan Bleby**

Audrey Brumby, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1967
Tjukula Tjuta, 2025, Yartapuulti (Port Adelaide)
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 76.0 × 122.0 cm
© Iwiri Arts – Audrey Brumby



Josina Pumani

The effects of the British nuclear tests conducted at Maralinga during the 1950s and 1960s are long-lasting, especially for the Anangu people living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of northwest South Australia. Josina Pumani is a contemporary South Australian artist working in ceramics and painting, whose work is deeply informed by this dark chapter in our history. Through hand-built forms, she tells the story of Maralinga and continues her family's tradition of advocating for Anangu in response to the nuclear testing.

'Maralinga hurt our lands and people and our story needs to be told', says Pumani. 'We think about it all the time. Why did this happen to us?'

Born and raised in Mimili, a remote Aboriginal community in the APY Lands, Pumani now lives in Adelaide, where she works from the APY Art Centre Collective's Adelaide studio. Her late mother, Kunmanara (Ngupulya) Pumani, and her grandmother, Kunmanara (Milatjari) Pumani, were two of the founders of Mimili Maku Arts. Pumani has been greatly influenced by the strong women in her family, learning about leadership and a deep connection to Country.

Growing up, Pumani listened to her family's stories about the impact of the Maralinga bombings, which destroyed many lives, lands and livelihoods. Her uncle, Yami Lester, was blinded by the bombings, and many others suffered both physically and emotionally. Already an established painter, Pumani decided to explore ceramics, using the stories she had heard from her family as inspiration.

Pumani believes it's important to continue to tell the story of Maralinga and bring it back into the national consciousness. The testing, which covered an area of 3300 square kilometres, has had a lasting impact on the land and the people who were living there, largely due to the acquiescence of the Australian Government. Pumani's ceramic pots embody these stories. Using a unique technique, she creates pieces that are rich with texture and detail.

Pumani's powerful ceramic vessels represent the black plume of smoke containing radioactive particles, a form that is synonymous with the bombs. The vibrant red represents the fires caused by the bombs and the black or grey symbolises the smoke. The exterior of the pots features markings that represent the Anangu people gathering in shelters, the land before the bombing, along with imagery of the bombs, smoke and the devastated terrain. The large vessels are deeply connected to the land through the material itself and through Pumani's process of creation.

Josina Pumani, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia,
born Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands,
South Australia 1984
Maralinga, 2024, Adelaide
hand-built stoneware, underglaze, 37.0 × 41.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist and APY Studio Adelaide
photo: Andy Francis

Jane Llewellyn



Manini Gumana
Napunda Marawili
Marrnyula Munungurr

Binygurr Wirrpanda
Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu

For some artists the landscape is not just a setting or a backdrop: it is a muse, a teacher and a spiritual force. This is true of all the Yolŋu artists included in this exhibition. Staring out across an open plain or into a fecund jungle or along the crystalline coastline, Yolŋu artists can see the invisible sacred design that represents that specific place. This is like a barcode that, when scanned, reveals the history, content and ownership of that wäŋa, or place. Only those educated in the full identity of that Country, and how to paint it, can dare emulate this pattern.

Conventionally, this miny'tji, or sacred clan design, was rendered in the classical style, using earth pigments of red, yellow, black and white applied to wood or bark, using a fine brush made from a few strands of a young girl's straight hair (marwat). However, this exhibition features the innovative works of a group of artists who have each developed a unique way of depicting the identity of the land that inspires them.

Perhaps the most surprising of these is Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu. He is a young, tall, handsome, deaf man who has worked as a digital artist and filmmaker at the Mulka Project since he graduated from the bilingual school at Yirrkala. His muse is the coastal headland of Buymarr, where he grew up. He has continually returned to this theme in his film and digital works, and now for the first time he is approaching something similar to a Western landscape rendition, except using the medium of bark and ochres.

Marrnyula Munungurr is a well-established artist who has taken a different route – stripping back the design to its bare bones with minimal colour. Napunda Marawili has followed a similar approach in showing the turbulent, fire-imbued coastal saltwaters of Yathikpa with a monochrome palette. Manini Gumana has gone the opposite way, adding more colours to the traditional four by combining and mixing the primary colours into pastel tones. Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre chairman Binygurr Wirrpanda draws on his muse of the billabongs of Dhuruputjpi, adjacent to the endless floodplains of Yalata, but in this case he is using a rotary drill on abandoned road signage. According to Yolŋu protocols, these discarded items are considered part of the land for this purpose.

Unlike Western traditions of landscape painting, which often focus on visual likeness or romantic ideals of nature, Yolŋu art addresses the deeper truths of Country. The landscape is revered in sacred designs, symbols and patterns that convey not just physical geography, but also the spiritual and cultural knowledge passed down through generations.

Through this lens, Yolŋu art transcends the boundaries of genre. We can choose to view the work as a landscape painting, yes – but it is also history, philosophy, law and song. A muse can be a person or a 'personified force'. In this case, the Yolŋu regard the estates they are related to as a member of their family. Each work is a living testament to the Yolŋu people's enduring relationship with their spiritual and physical birthplace and an invitation to see the land not as a passive object but as a sentient, living, active, sacred force. As both muse and medium, the landscape continues to inspire Yolŋu artists to carry forward the spirit, stories and strength of their ancestors.

David Wickens

Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre

Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu, Gumatj clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born Miwatj Region, Northern Territory 1997
Buymarr (6223–24), 2024, Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
earth pigment on stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*), 84.0 x 62.0 cm
© the artist, Hugo Michell Gallery and Buku-Larrngay Mulka Art Centre



Ellen Trevorrow
2025 JamFactory ICON artist

It's hard to describe the full extent of what Aunty Ellen Trevorrow means to Ngarrindjeri people, because her legacy isn't just in the baskets she has made or the exhibitions she has featured in. Her legacy is in the community. It's the generations she has taught, inspired and nurtured through weaving. It's the ripple effect of cultural revival she has set in motion, one that continues to grow, year after year, stitch by stitch.

Aunty Ellen is a master weaver, a teacher, a cultural leader and a proud Ngarrindjeri woman. But to so many of us, she is something even greater: she is the thread that has held culture together in times when it was almost lost. Her work represents determination, not just hers but that of all Ngarrindjeri people who have fought to protect, preserve and pass on cultural knowledge in the face of erasure.

Her practice goes far beyond weaving objects. It is an act of cultural responsibility, of love, of resistance. She harvests rushes from Ngarrindjeri Ruwi (country) with care, guided by teachings passed down from Aunty Dorothy Kartinyeri, and she passes that same care on to others. For decades, she has taught weaving at Camp Coorong, in schools, galleries, festivals and community centres across the state. For many South Australians, the first introduction to Ngarrindjeri culture came through sitting beside Aunty Ellen and learning how to weave. That moment stays with people. It changes them.

Aunty Ellen has truly changed my life. I met her when I was ten years old at a workshop at Camp Coorong. I remember the smell of the soaked rushes, her warm laugh, the way she handed me a 'starter' with such calm confidence, like she already knew I would carry this practice forward. And she was right. That small basket I made is still one of my most precious possessions. But more than that, it was the start of something bigger – my own journey as a weaver, a curator and a woman committed to keeping our culture alive. I am just one of many lives she has affected. There are many more stories like mine.

What makes Aunty Ellen so special is her ability to bring people in to make them feel welcome, seen and connected. She shows people that culture lives in the everyday, in our hands, our stories, our shared time. Her impact spans generations – those who learned directly from her and those who learned from someone she once taught. That's the power of cultural continuation.

This exhibition, *JamFactory ICON Aunty Ellen Trevorrow: Weaving Through Time*, is not just a showcase of Aunty Ellen's incredible work alongside her longtime collaborator Jelina Haines. It's a celebration of her as a pillar of community. Her legacy will continue far beyond the gallery walls. It will live on in the next generation of weavers and the next, in every bundle of rushes harvested with care, in every stitch that honours those who came before.

Aunty Ellen has given us more than art. She has given us belonging, purpose and pride. We are stronger and prouder of who we are all because of her.

Carly Tarkari Dodd

A number of the works in this exhibition were made in close collaboration with Jelina Haines and Alice Abdulla.

Ellen Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia, born Raukkan, South Australia 1955
Native Correa (Correa reflexa) Woven Bag, 2024
sedge grass, quandong seeds
Dune fan-flower (Scaevola calendulacea), 2024
jute string, sedge grass;
Yam Daisy Flower (Murnong) Woven Dress, 2025
sedge grass, jute string
8 Generations Woven Dress, 2025, sedge grass,
Meningie, South Australia, dimensions variable
© Aunty Ellen Trevorrow and Jelina Haines with the
contribution of Aunty Alice Abdulla
photo: Connor Patterson
modelled by Harmony Love, Keira Trevorrow and
Mia Biddle
In collaboration with Jelina Haines



Errol Evans
Tanya Singer
Trent Jansen

Maruku Arts



Panya year nganmanytju 2024-ngka December tayimingka nyara Design Miami-la, ngayulu ngarangi Curatorial Director. Nyarapalula ngayulu kuwarikutju nyakula tjukurpa wangkanyi Errol Evans-ta, Tanya Singer-la munu Trent Jansen-ta. Palumpa tjanampa warkangu Design Miami markamilanu USA-ngka Pritjintayitjan pulka mulapa palumpa tjanampa warka tjungungku Palyantja project '*Kurunpa Kunpu – Strong Spirit*'. Evans-nga munu Singer-nya pula Anangu Nguraritja manta nyanganguru, munu nyinanyi putingka ngurur-ngururpa ngura ini Railway Bore-la. Ngura kulupa palyatu, wali apa munu nganmanytju Railway warka tjutangu tjata kapi wakara nyinangi, alatjnguru railway layana tjunkunytjangka ngura kutjupa tjuta pakalaranu, munu ngura tjayntjamilanu. Ka Jansen-nga, Ngura ini Thirroul-ta nyinapai Australia-la kakarara Sydney-la tjaru, palunya panya mungatu altingu Maruku Arts nguru 2021-pangka.

Tanya Singer, Trent Jansen and Errol Evans, on Country, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
photo: Melvin Josy

Nyara palulanguru paluru tjana tjungungku wangkara kulinu ayitiya tjiyaku munu kapataku malangka pakanu, panya Iritiya nyinara tjukurpa alatji wangkara kulilpai ngapartji ngapartji-ngku. Malangka tjukurpa palulanguru warka wiru pakanu. Evans-nga panya tjamu, kamuru, mama munu kutu tjutangu punu katalpaingku munu palyalpaingku nintira wantinytja. Ka Singer-nya palumpa ngunytjungku munu Kami-nguru mai putitjaku munu punu palyantjaku nintiringkutja, paluru pula tjutangu tjukutjuku Jansen-nga nintinu. Paluru tjanaya mankurpangu tjiutu tjuta putingka paranyangangi panya yaltji yaltji ngura manta, pununya, mainya, kukanya tjana kuranu climate paluru tjayinytjiringkula. Nyaranguru tjukurpa ayitiya pakanu tjiyaku munu kapataku. Nyanga palulanguru kutjupa kutjupa tjuta ma utiringu – ngura panya kuli pulka munu manta piltingka rikina tjuta kumpira ngaralwaninyi. Kapi Pulkangu,



Tanya Singer, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1977
Trent Jansen, born Wollongong, New South Wales 1981
Manta Pilti Low Chair, 2023, Brisbane
American walnut, 74.0 × 62.0 × 68.0 cm
© Tanya Singer and Trent Jansen
photo: Fiona Susanto
Furniture made by Chris Nicholson

panya puyintjangka, manta mapalku tjulpirparipai munu panya tjintungku kampara piltintjangka kaliwanaringkula katakatipayi, ka nyakupai manta katalykatalypa Ngaranytjangka. Manta paluru apa ngulutjunanyi purinypa munu piruku Nyakunytja wiru ngaranya utu-utu kurunpa ipilymankupai. Singer-lu munu Jansen-tu tjataringkula punu kutjupa kutjupanguru tjataringkula arkara palyanigi manta pilti palunya purinypa arkanu, munu paluru pula tjiya munu kapata ini tjunu *Manta Pilti* (Dry Sands). Tjiya paluru panya series-pangka ngaranya, Palyantjankula nyangu malanga apa manta mulapa purinypa ngarangi nyakunytjangka. Kurungka panya nyanganyi ka manta apuwanu munu winkingka walpangku munu kapingku kurara pungkunytja. Ayitiya munu tjukurpa paluru pipanguru kamputangka tjunu, ka cabinetmaker ini Chris Nicholson-tu nyakula pununguru lipulankula palyanu, yaltji yaltji manta paluru tjana tjungu ngaraku tjiya purinypa munu purkarangku digital pitjanguru nampa nyakula lipulankula palyanu. Marangku karalymankura lipulankunytja, purkarangku nyakula manta kutju kutju tjungunu panya kapata waranya kutju ngaranytjaku kutjupa kutjupangka utingarinytja wiya munu punkantja wiya kiti purinypa tjunkunytja kuwaripangka, paluru panya lipulankula atatjankula palyanu.

Ayitiya palula ngurur-ngururpa, Evans-tu munu Jansen ayitiya kutjupa kulinu tjiyaku, design ini *Kutitji* (Shield) tjiya. Ayitiya paluru palunya pakalytjingu kutitjingu panya Iritiya palyalpayi pununguru anangungku kukaku ankunytjaku munu pikaku kulukulu. Nganmanytjuya punu watanguru palyalpayi kunpu ngaranytjaku, ka-panya tjukutjuku kayli ngarapai palunya tjukarutu munu karalya wiya. Munu kutitji tjuta marangku witalpayi tjara ka tjiya nyangakaya antala tjunu malaku, wiyapurinypa ngaranya palu nyara paluru panya tjukurpa kunpu kanyini munu kutitji kunpungka angatjungkupaila atunytjungkupai. Evans-tu wangkangi palumpa warka kunyu panya nyapa purinypa ozone layer, nyara paluru manta world nyangatja atunymankupai, ka kutitjingu panya pungkupaingkatawara angatjungkupai. Nyara palulanguru *Kutitji* tjiyanya palyanu panya nganampa tjukurpa munu ngura kunpu kanyintjaku.

Nganana tjutangku purkararira kulintjaku munu nintiringkunytjaku ngaranya panya manta nyangatja munu urungka munkaritja tjuta kulu tjanytjiringu, ka palumpa tjanampa warkangku nganananya kuru alanu Design Miami-la ka kutjupa tjutangku ngapatji tjataringkula nganampa



Errol Evans, Djabugay/Western Yalanji people, Queensland, born Cairns, Queensland 1974
Trent Jansen, born Wollongong, New South Wales 1981
Kutitji Chair, 2023, Brisbane
American cherry, 112.0 × 106.0 × 91.0 cm
© Errol Evans and Trent Jansen
photo: Fiona Susanto
Furniture made by Chris Nicholson

ngura atunymankunytjaku ngaranya. Panya anangu Nguraritja ngura kutjupa kutjupanguru munu anangu Nguraritja tjuta Australiala-nguru iriti wirura ngura munu manta atunymankupai ka nyangatja kanpa tjutangku kurantja. Nganananya tjuta kurunpa pampunu nyanga tjana mankurpangku, Evans-tu, Singer-lu munu Jansen-tu inuwai purkarangku tjukurpa palumpa tjanampa warkawanu wangkara nintini climate tjainytjiringkunytjatjara. Paluru tjana tjiya munu kapata palyanu punu America-languru ini cherry, maple munu walnut munu Australia-la nguru wiya, tjinguru panya lipula ngarama palu piruku punu nyanga nguraritja tjuta carbon pulka ka punu nyara kutjupa carbon wiya. Munu paluru tjana nyangatja ngura munu waltja kutjupa kutjupa-nguru ka nyangatja wangkapai cross-culture tjungku nintintjaku munu nintiringkunytjaku, ngapatji ngapatji.

Palulanguru panya tjukurpa nyangatja wiru mulapa nintiringkunytjaku, ngura munu manta atunymankunytjaku.

'Somewhere between action and reaction there is an interaction, and that's where all the magic and fun lies'. So writes Tyson Yunkaporta in his 2019 book *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*, as he discusses the yarnning practice of Australian Aboriginal communities. The idea is simple, the implications profound: a group of people sit together and just talk, and more importantly, listen. There is no agenda in place. All participate as equals. Pictures may be drawn in the earth as a means of mapping and storytelling. The experience is directionless and potentially endless – which is exactly why it can get somewhere.

Last December at Design Miami, for which I served as Curatorial Director, we had a yarn with Errol Evans, Tanya Singer and Trent Jansen. The occasion marked the first presentation in the United States of their collaborative design project *Kurunpa Kunpu (Strong Spirit)*. Evans and Singer are of First Nations heritage and live deep in the interior of the continent, at a place called Railway Bore, near Indulkana in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. Tiny as it is, just a few buildings and an old depot, it is one nexus within the network of colonial expansion that has transformed this land. Jansen, based in Thirroul on the east coast south of Sydney, was invited to visit back in 2021, hosted by Maruku Arts.

Eventually a collaboration was agreed, and a creative process duly unfolded, in the unhurried and open-ended way that a yarn itself has. Evans, who comes from a long line of timber cutters, and Singer, an authority on the local flora and fauna, generously shared their knowledge with Jansen. They spent hours and days in the bush, looking at the effects that climate change was wreaking on its fragile ecology. From these observations, a design vocabulary emerged. There isn't much precipitation here now – a hot, dry land has become much more so. When it does rain, the parched ground buckles and cracks over vast stretches of terrain. Struck by this 'beautiful but terrifying' sight, Singer and Jansen developed a distinctive scalloped texture, then created a group of furniture pieces based on that motif. They called it *Manta Pilti* (Dry Sands). The chair in the series is subtractively carved, its pitted surface suggestive of geological erosion. The case pieces are made in a more complex fashion, by cabinetmaker Chris Nicholson; each irregular shell-like component is plotted digitally and separately fabricated, and finally assembled and laboriously hand-finished. The precision is such that the *Manta Pilti* tall cabinet could stand on its own without adhesive.

Meanwhile, Evans and Jansen were collaborating on another design, the *Kutitji* (Shield) chair. It takes its inspiration from hand-carried wooden shields used by First Nations hunters and fighters. Like those traditional artefacts, it is carved from the exterior of a debarked tree base, or 'barrel', and has all the subtle irregularity of the trunk's outer surface. Also like First Nations shields, it has a handle carved integrally into the back, a subtle but powerful sign of the human need for protection. Evans associates the work with the ozone layer that protects the atmosphere, which has been so disastrously degraded in recent decades. The *Kutitji* chair is a quiet call for new safeguards to be set in place, so that culture and Country can be sustained.

We can all use more of that encouragement. While it was certainly gratifying to offer a platform for this important work at Design Miami, so much more needs to be done to raise awareness. Like so many other peoples worldwide, First Nations Australians have done absolutely nothing to bring climate change upon themselves; it is a destructive force imposed from far away. We are all implicated. As a trio, Evans, Singer and Jansen are doing what they can. They have made their designs in American cherry, maple and walnut rather than Australian hardwoods, which would have been more symbolically apt but also would have had a much higher carbon footprint. They are also modeling a cross-cultural conversation of true equality, a call-and-response exchange that results in learning on all sides, more than the sum of its parts. In the long run, this is the only kind of growth that is truly sustainable.

Glenn Adamson Yankunytjatjara translation by **Tanya Singer**

Errol Evans, Tanya Singer and Trent Jansen in the Mast Furniture workshop in Brisbane
photo: Fiona Susanto



Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre

Mona Lisa (Benita) Clements
Carita Coulthard
Selma Coulthard
Dellina Inkamala
Delray Inkamala

Dianne Inkamala
Kathy Inkamala
Raelene Inkamala
Reinhold Inkamala

Vanessa Inkamala
Mandy Malbunka
Betty Namatjira Wheeler
Marcus Wheeler

In October 2023, Iltja Ntjarra artists travelled from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) to Canberra to collaborate with Canberra Glassworks with the intention of creating works of art and products that incorporate watercolour aesthetics into different glass techniques. The collaboration would allow for new interpretations and expressions of the desert landscape. Artists Selma Coulthard, Vanessa Inkamala and Dellina Inkamala worked with different glass artists, experimenting with various methods to create stunning pieces inspired by their tradition of watercolour painting.

Canberra Glassworks is a globally recognised glassmaking centre. It offers a wide range of techniques, including blowing, casting, kiln-forming, coldworking, neon, flameworking, stained glass, glass painting, sandcasting, engraving and mosaic. It also has a diaspora of makers and specialists who it works with when a project requires skills and processes outside those of the immediate staff and glass artists. Our artists were thrilled to experiment and learn there.

In September the following year, the team from Canberra Glassworks, including Aimee Frodsham and Brooke McEachern, alongside Central Australian designer Elliot Rich, brought the workshop to the Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre. Techniques and processes were adapted to ones that could be applied without the kilns, cutters and hotshop. The artists experimented with drawing on flat, layered and three-dimensional surfaces, building their understanding of translucency, scale and form. A few months later, Dellina Inkamala returned to Canberra Glassworks, joined by Kathy Inkamala and Carita Coulthard, to build on their evolving skills and the increased expressions their works were taking with the new medium.

A central aspect of this project was the development of emerging leader Dellina Inkamala, ensuring Aboriginal leadership remained at the heart of the collaboration. She played a pivotal role, translating the process and design ideas into English and Western Aranda for the artists and facilitators, and guiding and encouraging artists to explore new creative possibilities.

Through the interstate visits, video meetings and ongoing weekly in-person workshops, the team has been discussing how to collectively create and produce works for future exhibitions. Three bodies of work have come from this collaboration and are due to be exhibited over the next few years. The first is at the Tarnanthi Festival, with watercolour paintings and glassworks being showcased at JamFactory.

This initiative was made possible through the generous support of the staff at Canberra Glassworks and Creative Australia, who provided the opportunity for these artists to explore their art practice through a new medium. Iltja Ntjarra staff, including manager Marisa Maher, Tyler Arnold, Koren Wheatley and Iris Bendor, helped with getting artists involved in the project.

This project exemplifies collaborative creation and skill exchange. It has fostered meaningful interactions between Aboriginal artists and Canberra Glassworks artists, encouraging a space where mutual learning and experimentation can flourish, and everyone learns and benefits from the creative process.

Marisa Maher

p. 265: Kathy Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory 1968
Mount Gillen, 2025, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory
watercolour, gouache, glass, 35.0 × 20.0 × 23.0 cm
© the artist, courtesy of Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre
photo: Rhett Hammerton

p. 266: Vanessa Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory, born Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory 1968
Mount Sonder, 2025, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory
watercolour, gouache, glass, 35.0 × 20.0 × 23.0 cm
© the artist, courtesy of Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre
photo: Rhett Hammerton

p. 267: Raelene Inkamala, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1965
Tjoritja-West MacDonnell Ranges, 2025, Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory
watercolour, gouache, glass, 35.0 × 20.0 × 23.0 cm
© the artist, courtesy of Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre
photo: Rhett Hammerton





Kathy Dodd
Sheena Dodd
Tom Golin

Emma Singer
Pauline Wangin
Pinuka Yai Yai

Julie Yangki
Amy Yilpi
Rhonda Young

Tjanpi Desert Weavers and Tom Golin

Nganampa ngurangka tjuṭa ngaranyi – ka punu nyangatja tjuṭatjaratu. Nganapa palyara kulini rurkantja, tjinguru kupi-kupingku, walpangku, urungku. Nyara urinyi walpa paluru nyalpingka, ngangkalingka, ulpuru pakaltjingani muna urungka kulu urinyi. Nganapa kulini kapi pulka ngarala wanagara kulu ngarapai ngangkalingka. Tjukurpa tjuṭa tjunguni frame nyanga paluru.

In our environment there are many elements, and this shape also gives form to many possibilities. As we weave, we are thinking of a gusting motion, maybe produced by a whirly-whirly, by the wind or by water. We see evidence of the movement of the wind in the leaves, the clouds, the raising of the dust and movement in the water. We're thinking about rainstorms and lightning in the clouds. This frame integrates multiple possible readings.

Kathy Dodd, Julie Yangki, Pauline Wangin, Emma Singer and Sheena Dodd

Wind can be a terrifying, destructive force or a welcome, gentle breeze. It can pollinate forests or uproot trees, carry birds across oceans or boats beneath them. It's mostly an invisible presence, but if you're looking for it you can see it in the leaves, the grass, the sand or the water. Cirrus clouds are one of the clearest expressions of the wind. They only form above five kilometres high and are made of tiny ice crystals. Because they're so fine they're easily swept by the wind to make beautiful wispy shapes that reveal the wind's presence like brushstrokes on the sky. I think there's something graceful and ethereal about them, and the fact that they sometimes only exist for minutes makes them these ephemeral ice sculptures in the sky that only a handful of people who look up at the time will appreciate. These pieces are inspired by windswept cirrus clouds.

Tom Golin

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is a social enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council, which enables Aboriginal women in remote Central and Western Desert communities to earn an income through fibre art.

Beginning as a small basket-weaving workshop in Papulankutja in 1995, Tjanpi has since grown into a dynamic contemporary art movement, involving more than 400 women across twenty-six remote communities. This wide-reaching network of artists spans generations of women: mothers, daughters, aunts, sisters and grandmothers.

Grass weaving builds on a long history of collecting and utilising natural materials to stitch and weave practical and ceremonial objects, such as manguri rings. Weaving together locally sourced tjanpi (native grasses), raffia, wool and found materials, artists create expressive fibre works inspired by their lives, stories and unique desert environments.

A practice rooted in Country, culture and community, weaving and grass collecting ensure time is spent together on Country, where stories are shared, knowledge is passed along and intergenerational ties are strengthened.

Tjanpi continues to foster artistic excellence, cultural continuity and economic empowerment for women living on the NPY Lands – proving that from a simple bundle of grass, extraordinary things grow.

Tjanpi Desert Weavers translation by Beth Sometimes

Julie Yangki, Pinuka Yai Yai, Amy Yilpi and Pauline Wangin holding their woven sculptures in the evening light, Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, 2025
photo: Kate Murphy



Tiarnie Edwards

Working with clay and ceramics has been, and always will be, a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Working with natural materials is an ongoing and reciprocal relationship for our people, which is why so many artists feel drawn to working with this material. Ngarrindjeri emerging artist Tiarnie Edwards never thought that working in ceramics was a possibility, until they were introduced to the practice in the second year of their university degree. The storytelling of clay and ceramics is akin to the way that Country calls to us.

Tiarnie now lives on Kurna Yarta, but spent the majority of their life growing up on Nauo Country, outside Port Lincoln, in a small seaside community. From an early age, they remember sitting with their mother around a craft table at the community house, learning to paint flowers from craft magazines. From those early years, they then entered the Aboriginal Pathways program at UniSA before undertaking a Bachelor in Contemporary Arts. While working alongside Elders and other young people, a keen passion for arts and academia was sparked. Tiarnie says:

The idea that I could transfer my love of illustration and characters into three-dimensional objects, that people could interact with in the world, was a leading force in how I got entrenched in ceramics. I remember one of the first things we did was exploring the idea of what a vessel is, and to me a vessel is not always a practical object that can hold something, but any object that holds a story can also be a vessel.

For the past three years, Tiarnie has been working with ceramics, learning new techniques and challenging their practice. Their first figurative body of work, *OUTLAWS*, originated from their experience moving from the Pathways program, surrounded by other Blackfullas, to then being the only Blackfulla in their university course. Tiarnie says of the work:

it was an ode to the diversity and complexity of Blak identity with contemporary 'Australia'. Clay and ceramics are already such a strong connection to the symbolism of Country and making forms that represent Blak peoples.

They continue that the work 'blended urban styles with commentary on Australia's colonial history'.

OUTLAWS speaks to critical political and social commentary that centres Blackfulla experiences, especially in a post-referendum landscape. This work, originally a sole ode to Aboriginal identity, has grown to encompass how white Australia oversteps into Blackfulla spaces. For Tiarnie, they felt interrogated during this time:

A bit of that bled into that work as well as my frustration. This is to say, I think my work now often reflects the time it's made; what I am feeling about it and what I have to say about it. The only tool I have, to remind the future of the truth, is my art.

From this series, their favourite figure, *Captain Clown Cook*, resembled Ronald McDonald rather than the Captain Cook statues we often see. Tiarnie explains, 'I think being able to make



Tiarnie Edwards, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia, born Kurna Yarta (Adelaide), South Australia 1998
Hooligan, 2025, Adelaide
 buff raku trachyte and underglaze, 30.0 × 30.0 × 30.0 cm
 © Tiarnie Edwards, courtesy of the APY Centre Collective
 photo: Andy Francis

fun of Australia's history shakes the fragile foundations they've built. Here are these Blak figures who are comfortable in their urbanisation but are still themselves – still Blak and rooted in this land'.

Tiarnie's solo exhibition *Good Trouble*, showing at JamFactory for Tarnanthi, is about community feeling empowered to reach out beyond the systems that intend to see us fail. The work amplifies how all we have is each other; learning from the past and bringing each other forward together:

At the end of the day, all we have is each other – not institutions, not politicians, just us. We've always had more in common with one another than the few that sit above us comfortably. Community is also uncomfortable; it takes accountability, it takes work, it takes time, and it takes a few who are willing to break the rules of the world for a better one.

Good Trouble is a testament to Tiarnie's ongoing journey through contemporary art-making and ceramics. 'I have found people who have not only lifted me up and showed up, but also reminded me even when we are not together, there are people fighting for better – for everyone', they say. 'I want folks to go out and find those people for themselves and realise, although it is easy to fall for despair, it is far more fulfilling and worthwhile to gather those you trust and keep each other afloat'.

Tiarnie's practice is deeply rooted in their family, their activism, their community and those early memories of sitting at the craft table with their mother. For them, art is community and it is political – uncompromising and always with their people at the forefront, using ceramics as their vessel.

Maya Hodge

Ngarrindjeri artist Tiarnie Edwards at APY Art Centre Collective, Tarnantya/Adelaide, South Australia
photo: Cara O'Dowd



Jay Milera



Tracks of The Unseen – Lost Roads to Cultural Gatherings is more than a documentary. It is an evocative pilgrimage, a poetic unfolding into the hidden pathways of Australia’s rich Aboriginal footprint. This film breathes life into faded tracks, retracing the ancient connections between the Narungga and other neighbouring nation groups, illuminating a legacy nearly erased by colonial shadows.

At the heart of this intersection stands the narrative of the Nantuwarra people, a vital Narungga Nation clan who inhabited the region around Gulf St Vincent some 5000 years ago. Before rising sea levels reshaped their world, the Nantuwarra thrived in a landscape unlike today. With the gulf once a broad land bridge between neighbouring nations, the Nantuwarra could enable authorised ceremonial travel and communication among clans, fostering trade and cultural exchanges.

Directed and curated by Narungga storyteller Jay Milera, this evolving film resonates deeply with her heritage, threading oral narratives and visual lyricism into a tapestry of rediscovery. Each part of the series aims to reveal different insights into how these nations converged at

pp. 274, 275, stills: Jay Milera, Narungga/Kaurna people, South Australia, born Maitland, South Australia
Tracks of the Unseen, 2024, Port Wakefield and Port Victoria, South Australia
 video with sound
 © Jay Milera, courtesy of OSCA Projects
 images: Max MacKinnon



sacred crossroads near Port Wakefield – a meeting ground pulsing with life, ceremony and cultural gatherings. This was not just geography, but spiritual lifelines, arteries that colonial intrusion tried to sever.

The documentary gently, yet powerfully, confronts this disruption. It contrasts ancestral trade rhythms, where stories and resources flowed across nations, against colonisation’s stark brutality. With evocative visuals by cinematographer Max Mackinnon, each frame captures tension between loss and resilience, absence and presence, mourning and celebration. The camera roams landscapes steeped in silence yet loud with ancestral echoes, inviting us to contemplate forced assimilation, dispossession, stolen generations and cultural erasure.

Central to Jay’s storytelling is the lived experience of Elders whose voices pierce historical silence. Their testimonies, deeply personal yet resonant, articulate the generational trauma inflicted by colonisation, while revealing an enduring strength: resilience marked by reclaiming identity, language, ceremony and sovereignty.



As the narrative transitions toward contemporary reflection, the film acknowledges significant progress while underscoring the urgent need to heal fragmented identities and rebuild cultural ties. *Tracks of the Unseen* honours the present, whereby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reclaim cultural spaces, reconnecting to roots once severed. By underscoring how these nations once thrived in unity, the film fosters a broader dialogue about restoring intercommunity bonds and revitalising cultural gatherings. The symbolic storytelling weaves past and present seamlessly, encouraging reflection on the intersections of memory, place and identity.

Through its visual poetry, this documentary inspires viewers to witness and engage in preserving tangible and intangible First Nations heritage. Each captured moment – a landscape, a story by firelight or a quiet exchange of wisdom – is an act of reclamation. Ultimately, *Tracks of the Unseen – Lost Roads to Cultural Gatherings* transcends documentation; it is a cultural invocation, a call to reconnect with truths buried by colonial erasure. It invites all to journey along forgotten roads, to hear voices that speak from the earth, and to acknowledge that Australia's authentic heritage endures in these stories and sacred places.

This film is both remembrance and resistance – an unyielding reminder that First Nations culture is not lost, merely awaiting recognition, respect and revival.

The first part of this evolving documentary screens as part of Tarnanthi 2025.

Garry Goldsmith

pp. 276, 277, stills: Jay Milera, Narungga/Kaurna people, South Australia, born Maitland, South Australia
Tracks of the Unseen, 2024, Port Victoria and Eastern Yorke Peninsula, South Australia
 video with sound
 © Jay Milera, courtesy of OSCA Projects
 images: Max MacKinnon



Ryan Presley

Inferno. Paradise Won. Fresh Hell. Mongrel. Taking on the lofty themes of power and dominion, religion and colonialism, empire and its discontents, Ryan Presley has already created a significant body of work that destabilises traditional histories and memory-making.

Presley is perhaps best known for *Blood Money*, beginning in 2010, in which he reimagined Australian currency as celebrating Aboriginal history instead of colonial rule. By replacing Queen Elizabeth with Regina Pilawuk Wilson on the five-dollar note, he performed an act of subversion and homage. The Ngan'gikurrungurr Elder and artist is rightfully honoured, but Presley's portrait is more than a simple substitution for the British monarch or another plastic banknote. Presley worked closely with Wilson in creating elements of the composition, then meticulously painted her likeness, flanked by a lotus flower and sand palm, on hand-woven paper. With *Blood Money*, a rebel with a cause – and exceptional artistic technique – was born.

This technical prowess, along with the deep veins of Presley's research, often goes unremarked in reviews of Presley's work. In 2024's aptly named *Daydreamer* exhibition at Milani Gallery in Brisbane, Presley's exceptional command of watercolour, oils and graphite was on display, as much as the surreal allegorical qualities that he has embraced in his practice. With his carefully selected references to Aboriginal symbols and classical antiquity, Presley's paintings cross multiple temporalities, places and cultures. Iconic works of art and recognisable symbols are adapted to new circumstances and acquire new motives.

Presley's Aboriginal protagonists have a strong – almost ecstatic – sense of self. Confident and aspirational, they are not to be ruled. The imperial past contravenes, with its antique columns and crowns, as does the present, with petrol and space stations. All these symbols act as foils for determined action: a mother, ennobled by flames instead of a halo, nurses her child; a warrior wields hunting spears that now have firepower. Human and inhuman elements are equally animated. Art-making becomes an act of reckoning.

Jacques Rancière once valorised 'the song of inanimate existences, inert things that seem animal, vegetative souls, states that dream and landscapes that think!'¹ This could almost be a rallying cry for Presley's *Ozy, Ozy, Ozy I*, 2023. Two classical Doric columns flank the scene. One has become a nesting spot of an ibis – a bird once revered by the Egyptians as an earthly manifestation of the god Thoth, now degraded to 'bin chicken' scavenger status. The half-constructed sculpture on a plinth is a Medici lion, a symbol of dominion and empire, its ruined state a reminder that political power is temporary and transient. Under the lion, echoing its pose, is a snarling dingo uncovering a medieval orb. The meshing of animal power and historical emblems further complicates the unfurling country, a landscape that seems capable of engulfing it all. Pitched tents symbolise the recent rise in homelessness, and also evoke the Tent Embassy established in front of parliament in the 1970s. Soaring above, a surveillance satellite further destabilises the scene.

Presley is especially interested in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem *Ozymandias*, in which a once-powerful king is rendered null and void and yet preserved in statuary. 'I'm interested in ruins as sites degraded by time and nature but also worn and destroyed by conflict and catastrophe.'² Presley's perceptions of history are redolent with tension and release. There is the tug of the past and imaginings for days to come. Are these paintings of a secret history, or an imagined future? In dreamscapes, we are always somewhere in between.

Andrea Bubenik

Ryan Presley, Marri Ngarr people, Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1987

p. 279: *Daydreamer II*, 2024, Meanjin (Brisbane)
pencil on arches paper, 102.0 × 66.5 cm

p. 280-1: *Daydreamer IV*, 2024, Meanjin (Brisbane)
pencil on arches paper, 102.0 × 187.0 cm

© the artist, courtesy of Milani Gallery

This is an abridged version of the essay *Ryan Presley's Dreamscapes*, commissioned by the Samstag Museum of Art for their 2025 Wirltuti season of exhibitions

1 Jacques Rancière, *The emancipated spectator*, trans. George Elliot, Verso Books, London, 2009, p. 73.

2 Ryan Presley, conversation with the author, 14 April 2025.





Fleeting Moments Rhubee Neale

Ahead of the Tarnanthi Festival, The Mill's exhibiting artists for Tarnanthi 2025, Shane Cook and Rhubee Neale, sat down with Shane's mentor Jo-Anne Driessens to talk about their upcoming exhibitions. In this conversation they speak about making work as contemporary First Nations artists and the importance of letting Country take the lead.

Shane Cook (SC): Over the last couple of years, I've accumulated photos, journal entries and a lot of stories from my family. I've been going back home, being back on Country for the first time, and being able to share with my family. When I went back to Wulli Wulli Country, I didn't really classify myself as a photographer, but being back there it became evident that photography is part of my practice now. And then that's led into the mentorship with Aunty Jo-Anne.

Jo-Anne Driessens (JD): I've identified my pathway back to Koa Country. I was recently there reconnecting, trying to understand the landscape and the stories I have been told. I am here to guide Shane with his process and family history conversations, and I'll be learning off Shane just as much as he is learning off me. We're both reconnecting with Elders to make sure we're doing that properly, and at the same time archiving anything that might come up, that might be of use, that we can share with our families.

Rhubee Neale (RN): My exhibition is called *Fleeting Moments*. I paint what I call paradise places. I put elements of growing up in the desert in them, but basically they're just whatever I see in my mind, happy places. When I was a child, I used to watch all the family paint our dreaming stories, all those dreaming totems that are mine. Art has been amazing for me!

SC: I grew up around family stories, but not necessarily stories of my family being on Country. So to be able to actually spend time there is a really significant part of that storytelling, to be able to sit and visually see it and feel it. Yeah!

RN: It's amazing! Whereas I grew up in the culture, as a child you don't realise what you have. Being on Country, listening to language, listening to family singsongs, and connecting the Country. So it's amazing. And it's lovely hearing your story, Shane, about coming back to that.

JD: I'm really interested in archives and research. And then Shane was showing me all of his archives during my visit to his home this week. I was impressed and relieved that a younger person has a similar interest and is a collector of archive records and books. And I thought, this is ironic, we have a similar proactiveness towards learning as much as possible about culturally relevant stories and records that have impacted our families, and here we are on a very timely mentoring opportunity. I'm asking myself 'What does that look like?' There is already a natural appreciation in learning as much as possible through considered image-making on Country and the preservation of the visual story through the camera. I am hoping it will offer new perspectives.

RN: Well, I do similar, I keep the stories alive. To show our Country, and our connection, because it's always there, no matter if we've been separated from it. We're connected to Country, ancestors above, below. Even if you've moved, you will be drawn back to an area, and then later on, you'll find out that you're connected to that Country. It called you home.

Shane Cook, Guwa (Koa)/Wulli Wulli people, Queensland, born Kurna Yerta 1992
Landscape Scars, 2025, Queensland/Adelaide
 digitally enhanced photograph, dimensions variable
 © Shane Cook
 photo: Shane Cook



SC: Time back on Country helped me separate what's my business, part of my art, what I want to share, from my own personal view. I want to be doing artwork that really expresses my feelings. I'm just trying to think about the art itself, rather than the outcome of it.

RN: In the moment! Yeah, that's the one I've learned now, just being present, and then it'll come out.

JD: Having recently been on Country, I'm thinking 'How do I let Country take the lead?' You might have all these ideas and you got this schedule, and you're like, boom, boom, boom, and then things just happen. I was just trying to explain it to Shane yesterday, like everything I manifested in my head, on Country was presented to me within twenty-four hours. Acknowledging Rhubee's quote and natural ways in working as an artist, 'let it happen'.

RN: I learned that growing up – family just sat, just be part of the land. Being part of that is the only way that you're you. You become a vessel for your ancestors to show you yes and connect. Because, like I said, your ancestors are in you, your DNA is strong because it gets connected to this Country.

JD: Well, I'm just literally taking a moment to relearn today – and particularly being invited into this space, which is a really nice surprise – instead of having preconceived ideas and thoughts, and I just have to trust my instinct more and go with the guidance.

RN: Yeah, we're not walking alone, we've got all the ancestors with us.

Rhubee Neale, Anmatyerre/Arrernte people,
Northern Territory, born Mparntwe (Alice Springs),
Northern Territory 1964
Family Day Out, 2022, Adelaide
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 41.0 × 51.0 cm
© the artist



It is a rare gift to live, create, grow and nurture future generations through unbroken connection with your own Country, with your ancestor's birthplace memorialised, seen and honoured at your doorstep, as ever-present and embodied in everything you do. *Lartelare* – keeper of the Black Swans. In your blood your heart your spirit your breath. *Sisters of Lartelare* – you are her descendants forever guided, as a collective now guiding the creative ecology of this place. Your acts of gentle resistance are grounded in care and respect, mapping and weaving, distilling scent and oil and colour from Country and archive to fabric and video and installation. *Veronica Brodie* – Lartelare's great-granddaughter. Your mother, nanna, wise-Aunty and friend. Her gift is her legacy of unbroken survival, of existence and resistance and the right to be free.

Gulf waters ebb and flow against long stretches of old dunes lined with wide strands of teatree, sheoak, daisy bush, and acacia scrub that eventually thins toward a merging of inland swamp and marshland – that briny special place where fresh and salt waters meet. Soft sedges and reedbeds lean from pool to channel to tributary and inlet – a perfect fine-balanced system feeding to and from vast mangrove forests, generative, rich and abundant with life. The Port is home. The beach is home. The river is home. She is home.

this river flooded with story carries memory on undercurrents that pull and twist in surprising directions captures moments drags them down settles with sediment layers of residual voices visions objects stirred and compacted thick mix rich silted mud-like-blood pulsing with dreams past-lives pulsing eroding an inevitable ephemeral change stories roar whisper respond to the force of time they transform upon tides rise and fall with the moon consolidate and rupture to shift then drift currents circulate into new moments seep into past-present-future memories imprint fine-silt your skin a subtle translucent familiar drops of essence spills of blood a trace

In 1890, Lartelare and her family were forcibly removed from their campsite at Glanville to make way for the Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) complex. Decades of oppressive conditions followed under colonial rule – forced movements and separation from family and Country. Stories of Lartelare continue to flow through generations of bloodline connection to her birthplace, calling her descendants home. After the CSR refinery was demolished to make way for a marina, high-rise housing and retail complex development, the Lartelare Glanville Land Action Group activated around Aunty Veronica in a fierce campaign to protect her Country.

Black-Swan ripples hold our gaze the river swells and currents tempt us to dive in drink it all and dissolve time luring deep-deeper toward shards of light that slice and glide to a soft sliding fade where sun cannot reach where the surface no longer glistens this is the quietest-dark and never still currents churn through inlets-outlets-islands they murmur under over and all around they sink deeper on a chill of memory a decade of protest hand-holding-harmony flag-



flying-peace and torrent-rage hear the Lartelare Glanville Land Action Group standing strong-with-song this land open up to taste it all the sweet-solidarity the salty-sorrow the struggle's bitter-end we stood strong with Lartelare's descendants and ancestors against this development see it ripple and reflect new neon-light stories under a dark moon so heavy-hearts shimmer and lap and float back to us all but here on this land known as *Yerta Bulti* we are still awake in the land of sleep we are still afloat on the land of grief...

Aunty Veronica fought long and hard for that birthplace-site of her ancestors and her land rights to be recognised. The New Port Quays Consortium development was completed in 2009, two years after she died. The Lartelare Memorial Park was designed as a place of reflection to honour and celebrate all descendants – a native garden weaving steel and stone sculpture-art with text imprinted in the concrete. The intergenerational continuity story is clear: *this birthplace of Lartelare and her daughter Laura Spender remains the traditional home of Rebecca, Veronica and their families and generations to come ...*

Black-Swan ripples hold our gaze on this quiet drift of memory they all appear right here *Sisters of Lartelare* attending to legacies of welcome of language of weaving and story *Sisters of Lartelare* activating sensory remembrance with purpose and power so *the shadows of our past won't fade with land transformed for the future.*

Natalie Harkin

This essay is a response to the ongoing creative collaborations of Sisters of Lartelare, an intergenerational project that aims to open new understandings of Kurna history, stories and culture connected to Yartapuulti (Port Adelaide). This ongoing initiative is the work of Bonny Brodie, Natasha Sutcliffe and Christina Flanagan. Sisters of Lartelare (the name gifted to the collective by Aunty Margaret Brodie) celebrate and preserve Kurna culture through creative projects. Previous creative iterations have included cultural mapping workshops, community events and exhibitions that have featured in Adelaide Contemporary Experimental's public program and Vitalstatistix's 2025 Adelaide Festival work *The Walking Track* by Karul Projects. Sisters of Lartelare are supported by project partner Vitalstatistix.

Dyed fabric installation by Sisters of Lartelare at Waterside Workers Hall as part of Vitalstatistix's Adelaide Festival show, *The Walking Track* by Karul Projects, 2025, Sisters of Lartelare, courtesy Vitalstatistix photo: Heath Britton

Nyunmiti Burton
Yaritji Heffernan
Megan Lyons

Sandra Pumani
Margaret Richards
Leshaye Swan

APY Art Centre Collective

Tjunguringanyi – Coming Together is an exhibition that illustrates the lived experience, wisdom and knowledge of Aboriginal women, centred around wellness, the importance of families and contributing to healthy communities. Women coming together supporting other women (and men), across generations, living on Country and in urban environments.

Yankunytjatjara woman Sandra Pumani explains: 'Women need support, coming together and building that relationship with them, getting them to trust you and getting their side of the story, stand with them until they are on their own feet'.

Developed in collaboration with the APY Art Centre Collective, *Tjunguringanyi* features works of art by Nyunmiti Burton, Yaritji Heffernan, Megan Lyons, Sandra Pumani, Margaret Richards and Leshaye Swan. The APY Art Centre Collective's Adelaide Gallery and Studio provides an important link between the city and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia by supporting artists who relocate to Adelaide for medical treatment or family support. The APY Art Centre Collective represents a group of Anangu-owned and governed art centres working together on innovative artistic projects and strong business initiatives, providing support to connect family, community and culture while fostering access to vital and independent income through creative practice.

The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation's Arts in Health program creates an interactive and inclusive healthcare environment, one that provides a meaningful difference for patients and families at every stage of their hospital experience. By presenting *Tjunguringanyi* at the Women's & Children's Hospital – known in Kurna language as Ngankiku Ngartuku Kukuwardli, 'a place of health that cares for women during pregnancy and birthing, babies, children and young people' – this exhibition highlights how art can illustrate storytelling to share knowledge, build understanding and creating connection. As Sandra Pumani explains:

I grew up in Mimili with my grandparents and mum. I grew up around these areas out bush and down the lines of family, I was taught so much with the storylines. It is important for us to teach the kids our storylines and my paintings are to teach. My Grandma, Milatjari Pumani, was an artist and my Mum, Ngupulya Pumani, was an artist and my Aunty Betty Pumani is an artist, so it is in the Pumani family.

With a growing commitment in healthcare sites to create culturally safe environments and make meaningful gains in Aboriginal health and wellbeing – closing the gap on the healthcare inequalities for Aboriginal families – we must explore ways to integrate Aboriginal cultural perspectives into care practices, prioritising Aboriginal ways of knowing and communicating to create shared understanding. Sandra advocates:

We have to come together and walk the two worlds; this is my world here and yours here – bringing that together and making it happen. If I don't know your culture and you don't know my culture, we are lost – there's a gap.

Tjunguringanyi offers a platform for these celebrated Aboriginal women artists – mothers, grandmothers and aunts – to build strength and offer cultural connections, education and visual storytelling for the whole hospital community: the children, new mothers, women, their families and the healthcare staff.

Leshaye Swan, Sandra Pumani and Josina Pumani at the APY Centre Collective, Adelaide

pp. 290–1: Installation view featuring the Namatjira Collection, Tarnanthi 2015, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed





Tarnanthi
Artists

Tarnanthi at the Gallery: Artists

Tony Albert, 2011

The following biographical information is organised by artist name; language group; domicile; and representing art centre (where appropriate).

Karen Mills, 2011

Tony Albert, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji people, Queensland; Sydney

Badger Bates, Barkandji people, New South Wales; Broken Hill, New South Wales

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Amata, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Tjala Arts (deceased)

Betty Campbell, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Mimili, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Mimili Maku Arts

Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja people, South Australia/Northern Territory; Pukatja (Ernabella), Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Ernabella Arts Inc. (deceased)

Maree Clarke, Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung people, Victoria/New South Wales; Melbourne

Layne Dhu-Dickie, Banyjima people, Western Australia; South Hedland, Western Australia; Spinifex Hill Studio

Janet Fieldhouse, Kalaw Lagaw Ya/Meriam Mir people, Torres Strait Islands, Queensland; Cairns, Queensland

Nyaparu (William) Gardiner, Nyangumarta/Warnman/Manjilyjarra people, Western Australia; South Hedland, Western Australia; Spinifex Hill Studio (deceased)

Marlene Gilson, Wathaurung/Wadawurrung people, Victoria; Gordon, Victoria

Julie Gough, Trawlwoolway people, Lutruwita (Tasmania); Nipaluna (Hobart), Lutruwita (Tasmania); Bett Gallery

Manini Gumana, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Wendy Hubert, Yindjibarndi people, Western Australia; Roebourne, Ieramugadu, Western Australia; Juluwarlu Art Group

Judith Pungarta Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory; Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory; Hermannsburg Potters

Tjilpi Kunmanara Kankapankatja, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia; Kaltjiti Arts (deceased)

Angelina Karadada Boona, Wunambul/Worrora people, Western Australia; Kalumburu, Western Australia; Kira Kiro Artists

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Amata, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Tjala Arts

Tjungkara Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Amata, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Tjala Arts

Yvonne Koolmatrie, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Berri, South Australia

Gail Mabo, Piadram clan, Mer (Murray Island), Torres Strait Islands, Queensland; Townsville, Queensland

N Marawili, Madarrpa clan, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre (deceased)

Ricky Maynard, Pakana, Lutruwita (Tasmania); Truwana (Cape Barren Island), Lutruwita (Tasmania)

John Mawurndjul, 2011

Karen Mills, Balangarra people, Western Australia; Darwin

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia; Iwantja Arts (deceased)

Dhambit Mununggurr, Djapu clan, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

John Mawurndjul, Kuninjku people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Vincent Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory; Indulkana, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Iwantja Arts

Motorbike Paddy Ngal, Anmatyerr people, Northern Territory; Sandover Region, Northern Territory; Utopia Art Centre (Urupuntja Aboriginal Corporation)

Mavis Ngallametta, Kugu-Uwanh people, Queensland; Aurukun, Queensland (deceased)

Alair Pambeگان, Wik-Mungkan people, Queensland; Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland; Wik and Kugu Art Centre

Kumantjai H. Pareroultja, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory; Kulpitharra (Lundara outstation) west of Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Northern Territory; Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre (deceased)

Thea Anamara Perkins, Arrernte people, Northern Territory, Kalkadoon people, Queensland; Sydney

Josie Petyarr Kunoth, Anmatyerre people, Northern Territory; Upungalindum, Utopia, Northern Territory

Ryan Presley, Marri Ngarr people, Northern Territory; Yuggera Yugambeh (Logan City), Queensland

Reko Rennie, Kamilaroi/Gamilaroi/Gamilaraay people, New South Wales; Melbourne

Brian Robinson, Maluyligal/Wuthathi/Dayak people, Waiben (Thursday Island), Torres Strait Islands, Queensland; Cairns, Queensland

Teho Ropeyarn, Angkamuthi/Yadhaykana people, Northern Cape York, Queensland; Cairns, Queensland

Sandra Saunders, Ngarrindjeri/Boandik people, South Australia; Wangary, South Australia

Yhonnie Scarce, Kokatha/Nukunu people, South Australia; Melbourne and Adelaide

Darrell Sibosado, Bard people, Western Australia; Lombadina, Western Australia

Garry Sibosado, Bard people, Western Australia; Lombadina, Western Australia

John Prince Siddon, Walmajarri people, Western Australia; Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia; Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

Pauline Sunfly Nangala, Kukatja people, Western Australia; Wirrimanu (Balgo), Western Australia; Warlayirti Artists

Tjunkaya Tapaya, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Pukatja (Ernabella), Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia; Ernabella Arts Inc.

Dhambit #2 Waṅambi, 2011

Dhambit #2 Waṅambi, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Garawan Waṅambi, Marrakulu clan, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Judy Watson, Waanyi people, Queensland; Brisbane

Bugai Whyoulter, Kartujarra people, Western Australia; Kunawarritji Community, Western Australia; Martumili Artists

Djakanu Yunupingu, 2011

Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Judy Watson, 2011

Dhambit #2 Waṅambi, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Garawan Waṅambi, Marrakulu clan, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Judy Watson, Waanyi people, Queensland; Brisbane

Bugai Whyoulter, Kartujarra people, Western Australia; Kunawarritji Community, Western Australia; Martumili Artists

Djakanu Yunupingu, Gumatj clan, Yolṅu people, Northern Territory; Yirrkala, northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory; Buku-Larrṅgay Mulka Art Centre

Arrkutja Tharra, Kungka Kutjara, Two Girls Tangentyere Arts and Yarrenyty Arltere Artists; Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory

Sally M. Nangala Mulda, 2011

Sally M. Nangala Mulda, Arrernte/Pitjantjatjara/Luritja/Yankunytjatjara people, Northern Territory; Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory; Tangentyere Artists

Marlene Rubuntja, Western Arrernte/Arrernte people, Northern Territory; Yarrenyty Arltere Town Camp, Alice Springs, Northern Territory; Yarrenyty Arltere Artists

Frontier Wars Bone Fish Story Place

Tony Albert, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji people, Queensland; Sydney

Alair Pambeگان, Wik-Mungkan people, Queensland; Aurukun, Cape York Peninsula, Queensland; Wik and Kugu Art Centre

Ilkurika

Spinifex Arts Project; Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia

Byron Brooks, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia

Kunmanara (Fred) Grant, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Simon Hogan, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia

Kunmanara (Lawrence) Pennington, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Patju Presley, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia

Ian Rictor, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia

Kunmanara (Roy) Underwood, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Lennard Walker, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia

Iwantja Inma

Iwantja Arts; Indulkana, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Alec Baker, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Angkuna Baker, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Maringka Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Hughie Cullinan, 2011

Arnie Frank, 2011

Betty Muffler, 2011

Betty Muffler, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Vincent Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Priscilla Singer, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Kulaṯa Tjuṯa

Ernabella Arts Inc.; Pukatja (Ernabella), Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia and Luritja people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Kunmanara (Gordon) Inngkatji, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Mr Jack, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Errol Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kevin Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Mark Morris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

William Tjapaltjarri Sandy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Lyndon Tjangala, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Iwantja Arts; Indulkana, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Alec Baker, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (David) Pearson, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Jimmy) Pompey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kaltjiti Arts; Fregon, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Kunmanara (Taylor) Wanyima Cooper, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Witjiti George, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Graham Kulyuru, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Mimili Maku Arts; Mimili, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Kunmanara (Ngilan) Dodd, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Mumu Mike Williams, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Ninuku Arts; Kalka Community, Aṅangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia

Jimmy Donegan, Ngaanyatjarra people, Western Australia and Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Carol Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Roma Young, Ngaanyatjarra people, Western Australia and Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Freda Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Moses Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Michael Bruno, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia and Luritja people, Northern Territory

Angela Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Cisco Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Hector) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Noel Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Ronnie) Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara Stanley Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Maureen Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Naomi Kantjuriny, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Freddy Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Brenton) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Ray) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Tiger) Palpatja, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Aaron Riley, Walpiri people, Northern Territory

Adrian Riley, Walpiri people, Northern Territory

Mr Wangin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Mick Wikilyiri, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Anwar Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Frank Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kamurin Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Marcus Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjungu Palya; Nyapari, South Australia](#)

Keith Stevens, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Lydon Stevens, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Bernard Tjalkuri, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Ginger Wikilyiri, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

[Kulata Tjuta - A work for Kunmanara \(Gordon\) Ingkatji](#)

[Ernabella Arts Inc.; Pukatja \(Ernabella\), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja people, South Australia/Northern Territory (deceased)

Mr Jack, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

[Iwantja Arts; Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Alec Baker, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Eric Mungi Kunmanara Barney, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Arnie Frank, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (David) Frank, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Vincent Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Kunmanara (David) Pearson, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Jimmy) Pompey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

[Kaltjiti Arts; Fregon, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Kunmanara (Taylor) Wanyima Cooper, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Witjiti George, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

[Mimili Maku Arts; Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Sammy Dodd, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Willy Muntjantji) Martin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Mumu Mike Williams, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Kunmanara (Willy) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Ronnie) Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Stanley) Douglas, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Brenton) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Freddy Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Ray) Ken, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Mick Wikilyiri, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

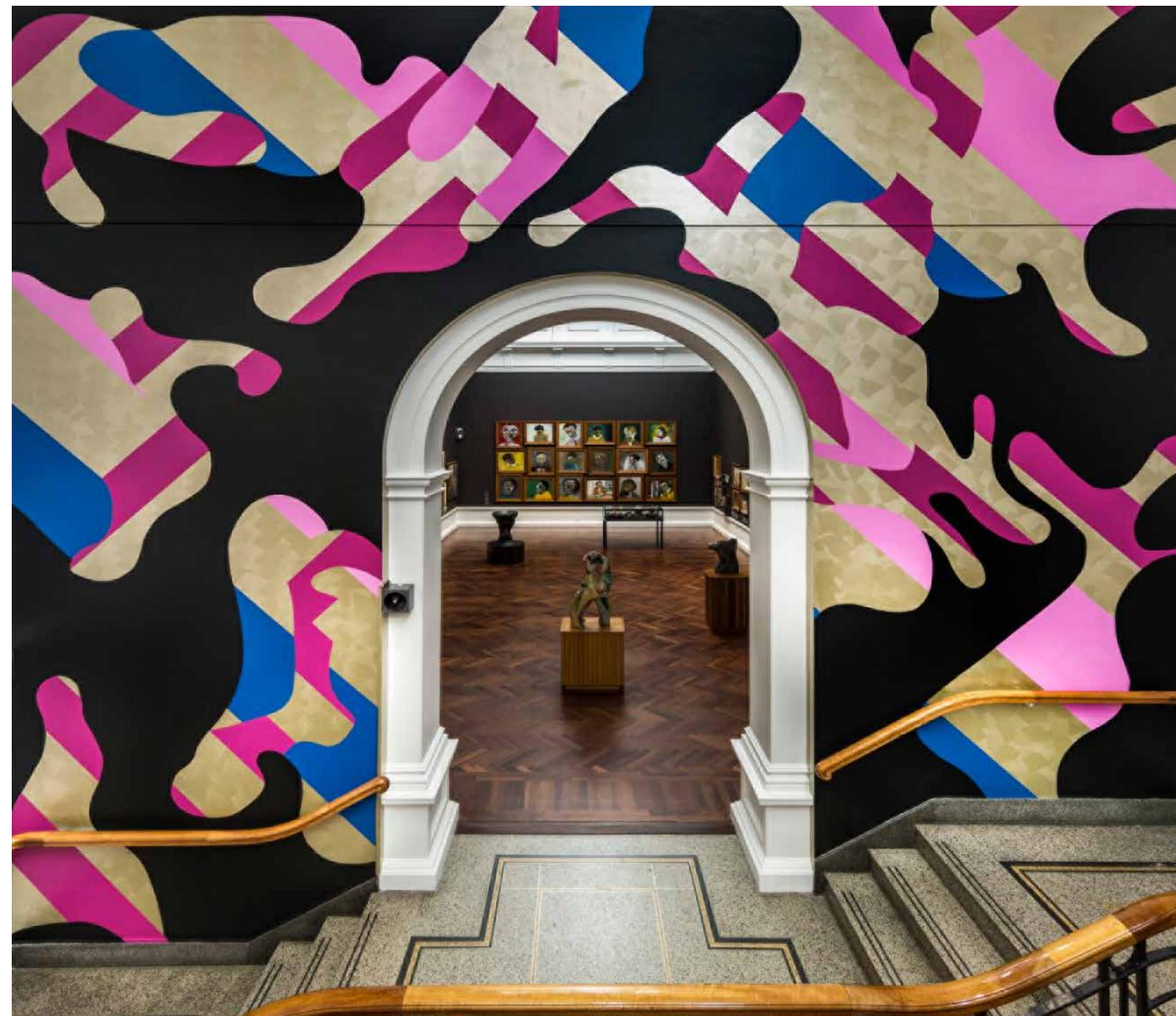
Anwar Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Kungkarangkalpa – Seven sisters](#)

[Ernabella Arts Inc.; Pukatja \(Ernabella\), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Kunmanara Stanley, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Carlene Thompson, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia



Installation view featuring *OA_Camo* by Reko Rennie, 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed



Installation view featuring *Keepers of Culture*, Tarnanthi 2021,
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed

[Iwantja Arts; Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Betty Muffler, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Sandra Goodwin, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Maringka Tunkin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Jeanne Wallatina, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Judy Wallatina, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

[Kaltjiti Arts; Fregon, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Tjangili Tjapukula George, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Manyitjanu Lennon, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Matjangka Nyukana Norris, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Antjala Tjayangka Robin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Mimili Maku Arts; Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Puna Yanima, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Freda Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Sylvia Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Tjungkara Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Alison Munti Riley, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjungu Palya; Nyapari, South Australia](#)

Angkaliya Eadie Curtis, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Beryl Nyuniwa Jimmy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kungka Kunpu

[APY Art Centre Collective, Adelaide](#)

Nyunmiti Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Rhoda Tjitayi, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Iwantja Arts; Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Lindy Aitken, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Angkuna Baker, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Leena Baker, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Sonia Bannington, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Verna Bannington, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Shantariah Brumby, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Maringka Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Betty Chimney, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Nellie Coulthard, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Emily Cullinan, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Kendra Cullinan, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Leonie Cullinan, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Vicki Yatjiki Cullinan, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Laurel Macumba, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Betty Muffler, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Ngila Mungkuri, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Chelsea Namatjira, Aranda/Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Natasha Pompey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Priscilla Singer, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Chantelle Stewart, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Pamela Stewart, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Rosalind Tjanyari, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Katie Walatinna, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Judith Walkabout, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Nancy Ward, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Kaylene Whiskey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Barbara Yanima, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Tilly Yanima, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

[Mimili Maku Arts; Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Betty Campbell, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Judy) Martin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Ngupulya) Pumani, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Milatjari) Pumani, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Milatjari) Pumani, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Freda Brady, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Wawiriya) Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Tjampawa Katie) Kawiny, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

detail: Bugai Whyoulter, Kartujarra people, Western Australia, born Pukayiyirna,

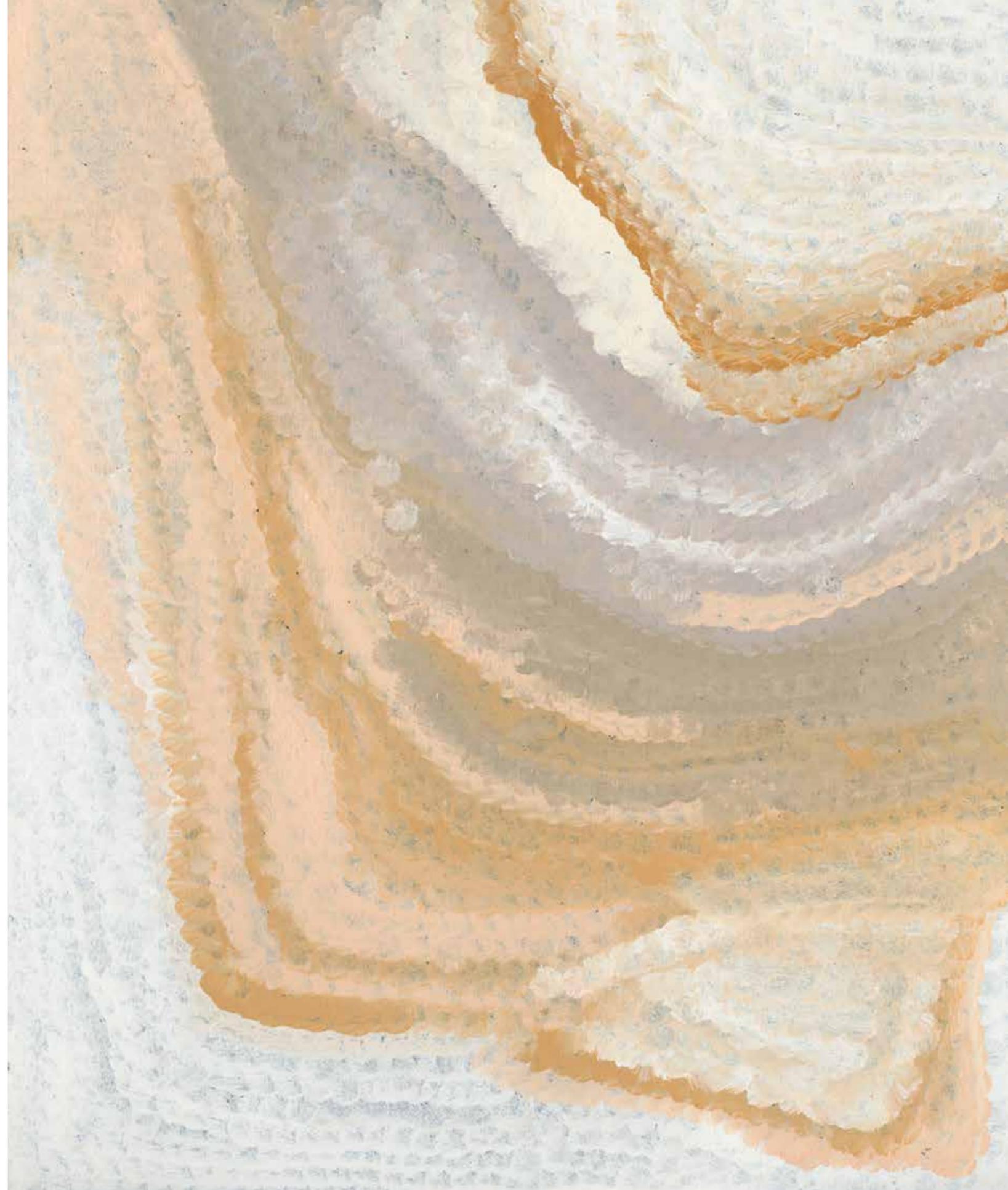
Western Australia c.1939

Wantili (Warntili, Canning Stock Route Well 25), 2021, Kunawarritji, Western Australia synthetic polymer paint on linen, 152.0 × 106.0 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2023

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

© the artist, courtesy of Martumili Artists



Kunmanara (Sandra) Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Tjungkara Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Maringka Tunkin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Paarpakani Take Flight and Tjanpi Punu trees

[Tjanpi Desert Weavers](#)

Kunmanara (Nyurpaya) Kaika Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Naomi Kantjuriny, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Iluwanti Ken, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Rene Kulitja, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia/Northern Territory

Kunmanara (Niningka) Lewis, Pitjantjatjara people, Northern Territory (deceased) (*Paarpakani Take Flight* only)

Kunmanara (Paniny) Mick, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Mary) Katatjuku Pan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased) (*Tjanpi Punu* only)

Tjunkaya Tapaya, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia;

Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia (*Paarpakani Take Flight* only)

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Painting on Country

[Tjungu Palya; Nyapari, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Marita Baker, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Beryl Nyuniwa Jimmy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Keith Stevens, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Minḡirr and Djirriḡiḡi (Garrawurra body paint design)

[Milingimbi Art and Culture; Yurrwi \(Milingimbi\) and Lanjara \(Howard Island\), Northern Territory](#)

Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra, Liyagawumirr-Garrawurra people, Northern Territory

Margaret Rarru Garrawurra, Liyagawumirr-Garrawurra people, Northern Territory

Minyma Tjutaku

[Spinifex Arts Project; Tjuntjuntara, Western Australia](#)

Kunmanara (Estelle) Hogan, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Myrtle) Pennington, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Kunmanara (Tjaruwa) Woods, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Ngalpingka Simms, Pitjantjatjara/Ngaanyatjarra people, Western Australia

Kunmanara Yarangka Elaine Thomas, Pitjantjatjara people, Western Australia (deceased)

Namorrorddo

[Maningrida Arts and Culture; Maningrida, Northern Territory](#)

Lena Yarinkura, Kune people, Northern Territory

Bob Burruwal, Rembarrnga people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Shared Experiences

[Tangentyere Arts and Yarrenyty Arltere Artists; Mparntwe \(Alice Springs\), Northern Territory](#)

Betty Nungarrayi Conway, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja/Yankunytjatjara people, Northern Territory

Kunmanara Donald Peipei, Luritja/Pitjantjatjara people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Trudy Inkamala, Western Arrernte/Luritja people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Sally M. Nangala Mulda, Arrernte/Pitjantjatjara/Luritja/Yankunytjatjara people, Northern Territory

Grace Kemarre Robinya, Arrernte/Luritja/Western Arrernte/Anmatyerr people, Northern Territory

Marlene Rubuntja, Western Arrernte/Arrernte people, Northern Territory

Kunmanara (Doris) Arlyetilhe Thomas, Luritja people, Northern Territory (deceased)

The Blak Laundry

Libby Harward, Ngugi/Quandamooka people, southeast Queensland; Jinibara Country, Queensland

Dominique Chen, Gamilaroi people, New South Wales/Queensland; Jinibara Country, Queensland

Tiwi Papers

[Tiwi Artists; Jilamara Arts & Crafts Association; Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory](#)

Agatina Black, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Kaye Brown, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Johnathon World Peace Bush, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Timothy Cook, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Nancy Marie Kerinauia, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Raelene Lampuwatu Kerinauia, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Janice Punguatiji Murray, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Columbiere Tipungwuti, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Conrad Kamilowra Tipungwuti, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Dino Wilson, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Pedro Wonaeamirri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

[Tiwi Artists; Munupi Arts; Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory](#)

Donna Burak, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

James Orsto, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Osmond Pangiraminni, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Alison Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Carol Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Christine Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Francesca Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Jacqueline Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Shirley Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Thecla Bernadette Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Cornelia Tipuamantumirri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

M. Walarmerpui, Tiwi people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Susan Wanji Wanji, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

[Tiwi Artists; Ngaruwanajirri Inc. Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island](#)

Gilbert Alimankinni, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Francis John Kerinauia, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Arthur Arthanasius Puruntatameri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

David Tipuamantumirri, Tiwi people, Northern Territory

Tjukurpa Kunpu Mulapa

[Mimili Maku Arts; Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Sammy Dodd, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Mumu Mike Williams, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia (deceased)

Waḡupini Iarrakitj and Waḡupini (clouds) ga Gurrutu (kinship connection)

[Buku-Larrḡgay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory](#)

Nawurapu Wunurḡmurra, Dhalwaḡu clan, Yolḡu people, Northern Territory

Ishmael Marika, Yolḡu people, Northern Territory

What if this photograph was by Albert Namatjira

[Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre; Mparntwe \(Alice Springs\), Northern Territory](#)

Myra Ah Chee, Southern Aranda (Pertame)/Luritja, Northern Territory

Benita Clements, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Ricky Connick Jakamara, Western Aranda/Pitjantjatjara people, Northern Territory

Tiara Doolan, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Kathleen France, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Noreen Hudson, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Clara Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Dellina Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Kathy Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Reinhold Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Vanessa Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Lenie Namatjira, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Gloria Pannka, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory

Ivy Pareroutja, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory

Kumantjai H. Pareroutja, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory (deceased)

Mervyn Rubuntja, Eastern Arrernte people, Northern Territory



Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja people, South Australia/Northern Territory, born Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory 1950, died Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021 *Walungurru*, 2015, Ernabella Arts Incorporated, Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia stoneware, 56.0 × 36.0 cm Pauline Colley Bequest through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2016 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide © the artist, courtesy Ernabella Arts photo: Saul Steed



Installation view featuring sculptures by Alan Kunoth, Dinni Kemarr Kunoth, Patrick Kunoth, Josie Petyarr Kunoth and Simon Kunoth, Tarnanthi 2015, Art Gallery of South Australia; Adelaide photo: Saul Steed

Tarnanthi Partner Exhibitions: Artists

Regional Tarnanthi

Woven within Stars

Roy Coulthard, Adnyamathanha people, South Australia; Stirling North, South Australia

Sonja (Jonas) Dare, Barngarla people, South Australia; Quorn, South Australia

Regg Dodd, Arabunna people, South Australia; Marree, South Australia

Patricia Fatt, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia; Coober Pedy, South Australia; Umoona Community Arts Centre

Donald McKenzie, Wangkangurru/Adnyamathanha people, South Australia; Davenport/Port Augusta, South Australia

Regina McKenzie, Luritja/Lower Southern Arrernte and Kuyani/Walpi people, South Australia; Yappala/Hawker, South Australia

Jenna Richards, Barngarla/Nauo/Wirangu people, South Australia, and Gubran/Noongar/Ngaji Ngaji/Balardong people, Western Australia; Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia

Lavinia Richards, Barngarla/Wirangu people, South Australia; Galinyala (Port Lincoln), South Australia

Vera Richards, Barngarla/Nauo/Wirangu people, South Australia, and Gubran/Noongar/Ngaji Ngaji/Balardong people, Western Australia; Galinyala (Port Lincoln), Adelaide

Tarnanthi Partner Projects

Adelaide Contemporary Experimental

Rewriting Landscapes

Troy-Anthony Baylis, Jawoyn people, Northern Territory; Kurna Yarta (Adelaide), South Australia

Patrick William Carter, Noongar people, Western Australia; Boorloo (Perth), Western Australia

Dylan Crismani, Wiradjuri people, New South Wales; Nuriootpa, South Australia

Adam-Troy Francis, Kurna/Ngarrindjeri/Wirangu people, South Australia; Kurna Yarta (Adelaide), South Australia

Libby Harward, Ngugi/Quandamooka people, southeast Queensland; Jinibara Country, Queensland

re a, Gamilaraay/Wailwan/Biripi people, New South Wales; Naarm (Melbourne)

Adelaide Contemporary Experimental

Kumarangk

Carly Tarkari Dodd, Kurna/Narungga/Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Adelaide

Tiarnie Edwards, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Kurna Yarta (Adelaide), South Australia; APY Art Centre Collective

Sonya Rankine, Ngarrindjeri/Ngadjuri/Narungga/Wirangu people, South Australia; Moonta Bay, Yorke Peninsula, South Australia; Lakun Mara

Sandra Saunders, Ngarrindjeri/Boandik people, South Australia; Wangary, South Australia

Betty Sumner, Yaraldi/Ramindjerri/Boandik people, South Australia; Raukkan, South Australia

Ellen Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Coorong/Meningie, South Australia

Sister Weavers, Mardawi Art Collective:

Temeika Campbell, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Murray Bridge, South Australia

Zemiah Campbell, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Murray Bridge, South Australia

Debra Rankine, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Meningie, South Australia

Elizabeth Rankine, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Murray Bridge, South Australia

Bessie Rigney, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Meningie, South Australia

Stephanie Russell, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Meningie, South Australia

Margi Sumner, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Murray Bridge, South Australia

Kaylene Whiskey, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia born Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 1976
Seven Sistas Sign, 2021, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia
 water-based enamel paint on metal, 75.0 x 270.0 x 3.0 cm
 Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2022
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
 © Kaylene Whiskey, courtesy of Iwantja Arts and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
 photo: Saul Steed



[AIARTS Gallery](#)

The art and legacy of Trevor Nickolls – interpreted by Kat Bell

Kat Bell, Gudjal/Girramay people, Queensland; Erawirung Country, Riverland

Trevor Nickolls, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia (deceased)

[APY Gallery Adelaide](#)

Generation Next

[APY Art Centre Collective, Kurna Yerta \(Adelaide\), South Australia](#)

Myarn Alden, Kija/Jaru/Ngarti people, Western Australia

Tiarnie Edwards, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia

Megan Lyons, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Rachel Lyons, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Josina Pumani, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Leshaye Swan, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Naomi Douglas, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Tanya Burton, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Umoona Community Arts Centre; Coober Pedy, South Australia](#)

Pearl Austin, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Myra Kumantjara, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Eileen Stanley, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

[City of Adelaide](#)

Purkarari: Slow down

[APY Art Centre Collective, Kurna Yerta \(Adelaide\), South Australia](#)

Nyunmiti Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Zaachariaha Fielding, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Yaritji Heffernan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Jennifer Ingkatji, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Megan Lyons, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Sandra Pumani, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Margaret Richards, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Tjala Arts; Amata, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia](#)

Yaritji Tingila Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

[Fabrik](#)

Yirr

Janette Murrungun, Nunggbuyu people, Northern Territory;

Numbulwar, Northern Territory; Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

[FELTspace](#)

Yarta Ngura

[Kurna Yarta \(Adelaide\), South Australia](#)

Dameeli Coates, Wakka Wakka people, Queensland

Dominic Guerrera, Kurna/Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia

Jayda Wilson, Gugada/Wirangu people, South Australia

[Flinders University Museum of Art](#)

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)

Nici Cumpston, Barkandji people, New South Wales; Charlottesville, Virginia, United States of America

Zena Cumpston, Barkandji people, New South Wales; Melbourne

David Doyle, Barkindji/Malyangapa people, New South Wales;

Broken Hill, New South Wales

Kent Morris, Barkindji people, New South Wales; Melbourne; Vivien Anderson Gallery

Adrienne Semmens, Barkandji people, New South Wales; Adelaide

Raymond Zada, Barkandji people, New South Wales; Adelaide

[Hahndorf Academy](#)

Piriyakutu

Iwiri Arts

Tjutjuna (Paul) Andy, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Audrey Brumby, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Amanda Daegar, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Tjaruwa Dunn, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Renae Nelson, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Inawinytji Stanley, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Janice Stanley, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Renita Stanley, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Janet Tjitayi, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Katrina Tjitayi, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Ruth Wayne, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

Tjimpuna Williams, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide and Pukatja (Ernabella), South Australia

[Hugo Michell Gallery](#)

Maralinga – Ngayuku Walytjaku Tjukurpa (My Family's Story)

Josina Pumani, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia; Adelaide; APY Art Centre Collective

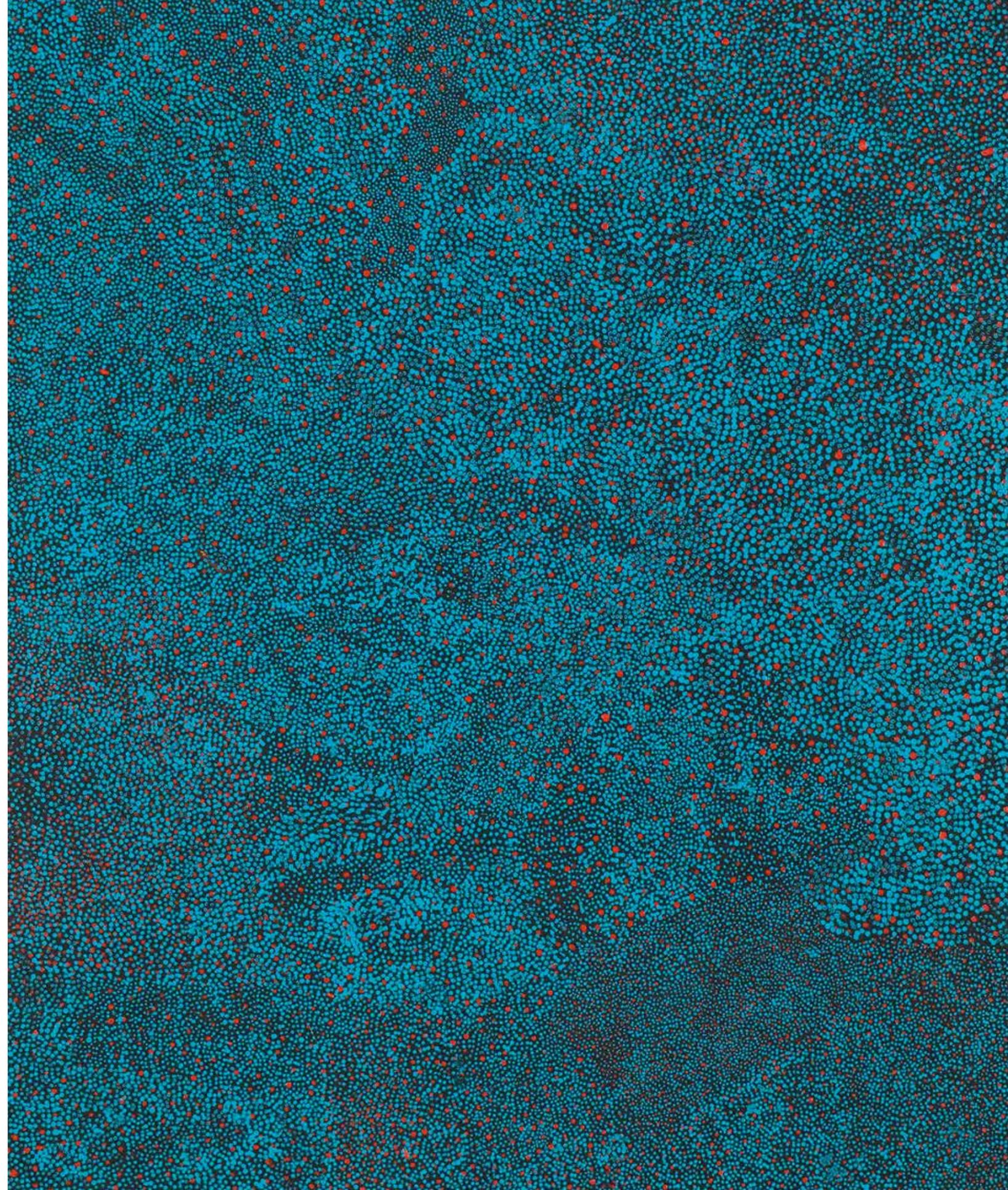
detail: Kwementyay (Gladdy) Kemarre, Anmatyerre people, Northern Territory, born Mount Swan Station, Northern Territory c.1940, died Mparntwe (Alice Springs), Northern Territory 2016

Bush Plum, 2013, Camel Camp, Utopia, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on paper, 77.0 × 58.5 cm

Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017

© Estate of Kwementyay (Gladdy) Kemarre/Copyright Agency, 2025





Lena Yarinkura and Bob Burruwal, from Maningrida Arts and Culture, with their work *Namorrordo*, Tarnanthi 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: John Montesi

Hugo Michell Gallery

Wäŋa as Muse

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre; Yirrkala, Northern Territory

Manini Gumana, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory

Napunda Marawili, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory;

Bäniyala, Northern Territory

Marnyula Mununggurr, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory

Binygurr Wirrpanda, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory

Gutiŋarra Yunupiŋu, Gumatj clan, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory

JamFactory

Weaving Through Time

Ellen Trevorrow, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Coorong/

Meningie, South Australia

Alice Abdulla, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Meningie,

South Australia

Jelina Haines, Tagalog/Visayan people, Philippines; Gawler,

South Australia

JamFactory

Kurunpa Kunpu | Strong Spirit

Errol Evans, Djabugay/Western Yalanji people, Queensland; Railway

Bore, near Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands,

South Australia; Maruku Arts & Crafts

Trent Jansen, Thirroul, New South Wales

Tanya Singer, Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara peoples, South Australia;

Railway Bore (near Indulkana), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

Lands, South Australia; Maruku Arts & Crafts

JamFactory

Our New Work on Glass / Nurnakanha Lyaartinya Urrkaapuntja

Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre; Mparntwe (Alice Springs),

Northern Territory

Mona Lisa Clements, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Carita Coulthard, Luritja/Pitjantjara/Western Aranda people,

Northern Territory

Selma Nunay Coulthard, Luritja/Arrente/Western Aranda/

Pertame people, Northern Territory

Dellina Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Delray Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Dianne Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Kathy Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Raelene Inkamala, Western Aranda/Luritja people, Northern Territory

Reinhold Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Vanessa Inkamala, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Mandy Malbunka, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Betty Namatjira Wheeler, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

Marcus Wheeler, Western Aranda people, Northern Territory

JamFactory

Rurkupi – Gusting, Revving, Rushing

Tjanpi Desert Weavers; Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara

Lands, South Australia

Kathy Dodd, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Sheena Dodd, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Tom Golin, Adelaide; JamFactory, Adelaide

Emma Singer, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Pauline Wangin, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Pinuka Yai Yai, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Julie Yangki, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Amy Yilpi, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Rhonda Young, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

JamFactory

Good Trouble

Tiarnie Edwards, Ngarrindjeri people, South Australia; Kurna Yarta

(Adelaide), South Australia; APY Art Centre Collective

OSCA – Open Space Contemporary Arts

Tracks of The Unseen: Lost Roads to Cultural Gatherings

Jay Milera, Narungga/Kurna people, South Australia; Kurna Yarta

(Adelaide), South Australia

Samstag Museum of Art

Ryan Presley

Ryan Presley, Marri Ngarr people, Northern Territory; Yuggera/

Yugambah (Logan City), Queensland

The Mill

Fleeting Moments

Rhubee Neale, Anmatyerre/Arrente people, Northern Territory; Adelaide

The Mill

Which Way Next Here

Shane Cook, Guwa (Koa)/ Wullli Wullli people, Queensland; Kurna Yarta

(Adelaide)

Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation

Tjunguringanyi – Coming Together

APY Art Centre Collective; Kurna Yarta (Adelaide), South Australia

Nyunmiti Burton, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Yaritji Heffernan, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Megan Lyons, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Sandra Pumani, Yankunytjatjara people, South Australia

Margaret Richards, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia

Leshaye Swan, Yankunytjatjara/Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia



Pauline Sunfly Nangala, Kukatja people, Western Australia, born Old Balgo Mission, Western Australia 1958
Kalpanu, 2019, Wirrimanu (Balgo), Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on linen, 150.0 x 75.0 cm
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
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Installation view featuring *Kala Kunbolk Colour Country*,
Tarnanhi 2023, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed

Tarnanthi Exhibitions 2015 – 2025

Each exhibition is organised by exhibition name; artist/s; venue; and presenting partner/s if applicable

Tarnanthi 2015

Tarnanthi at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Riverland: Yvonne Koolmatrie (Yvonne Koolmatrie), AGSA

Tarnanthi Textiles (various artists)
Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute

Balnhdhurr: a lasting impression – twenty years of the Yirrkala Print Space (artists from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre)
Light Square Gallery, Adelaide College of the Arts
Following the success of its premiere at Tarnanthi, *Balnhdhurr* toured nationally with Artback NT to fourteen venues in 2017–21.

Biting the Air (Fiona Foley)
Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia

Bound and Unbound: Sovereign Acts – Act II (Ali Gumillya Baker, Faye Rosas Blanch, Natalie Harkin, Simone Ulalka Tur), Flinders University Museum of Art & City Gallery and Yunggorendi First Nations Centre

A Darker Side of Dark #1–4 (Daniel Boyd), Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art; presented with Adelaide Film Festival

Handheld II (Christopher Burthurmarr Crebbin, Debra Rankine, Sandra Saunders, Peter Sharrock, Karumapuli Jacob Stengle)
Prospect Gallery; presented by Country Arts SA

Jewellery has always been here (Niningka Munkuri Lewis, Virginia Ngalaia Napanangka, Anne Thompson, Marissa Thompson, Walter Jugadai Tjungurrayi), JamFactory

Kapi ungkupayi / He gave us water (artists from Minyma Kutjara Arts Project), SASA Gallery

Les Eaux d’Amoore (Archie Moore)
Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art

mina lakapawa (Vicki West), Adelaide Central School of Art

Near horizons (Christina Gollan, Beaver Lennon, Damien Shen, Karumapuli Jacob Stengle), Migration Museum

Nganmarra: the container of life (artists from Bula'bula Arts)
Santos Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden

Nyakuntjaku (have a look): Desart Art Worker Photography Prize 2012–15, State Library of South Australia

Nyanganyi kuru nganampangku (seeing our stories through our eyes): Desart printmaking workshop at Cicada Press, State Library of South Australia

One love, one family: Barngarla stories of resilience (various Barngarla artists), Nexus Arts

Our Mob 2015 (various artists from South Australia), Adelaide Festival Centre and Yarta Purtli – Port Augusta Cultural Centre

Overseer / Officer (Jason Wing)
Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia

Shimmer (Sebastian Arrow, Tamara Baillie, Maree Clarke, Janet Fieldhouse, Nicole Foreshew, Dale Harding, Grace Lillian Lee, Vicki West), JamFactory and South Australian Museum

Stone tape theory (Sarah-Jane Norman), Queen’s Theatre; presented by Performance & Art Development Agency

White Bred (Blak Douglas, Amanda Radomi)
Fontanelle Gallery and Studios

The world is not a foreign land (Timothy Cook, Djambawa Marawili, Ngarra, Rusty Peters, Freda Warlapinni, N. Yunupingu)
Flinders University City Gallery; presented by Ian Potter Museum of Arts and NETS Victoria

Tarnanthi 2017

Tarnanthi at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Tarnanthi at the Port (various artists)
various locations in Port Adelaide

Abstracted muster (Mervyn Street with Robert Hannaford)
Adelaide Central School of Art; presented by Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

Barangaroo Ngangamay (artists from Sydney area)
Migration Museum

Bush Mechanics: The Exhibition (Thomas Jangala Rice, Jason Japaljarri Woods), Drill Hall, Torrens Parade Ground; presented by National Motor Museum

Clay Stories: Contemporary Indigenous ceramics from remote Australia (various artists), JamFactory

Collect: Waringarri Aboriginal Arts (Jan Griffiths, Peggy Griffiths)
JamFactory

Confluence: Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design (various artists), JamFactory

Entwined (Yolŋu artists from Bula’bula Arts) and String figures (Yolŋu artists from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre), Santos Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden

Kaiki and Taralyi (Major ‘Moogy’ Sumner AM, Charlotte Sumner, Damien Shen, James Tylor, Allan Collins, Cindi Drennan, Jessica Loughlin), Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute

Loss. Gain. Reverb. Delay. (Brad Harkin), Vitalstatistix

Melaa Thaldin – Standing in the sea (artists from MIArts Centre in collaboration with Grace Lillian Lee), JamFactory

New Light (Patrick Carter, Brad Harkin, Regina Pilawuk Wilson, Raymond Zada), outdoor locations in Adelaide; presented by Australian Network for Art & Technology in association with the City of Adelaide

Next Matriarch (Ali Gumillya Baker, Paola Balla, Hannah Brontë, Miriam Charlie, Amrita Hepi, Nicole Monks, Kaylene Whiskey)
ACE Open

NG Salon (Katjarra Butler, Nola Yurnanguru Campbell, Bob Gibson, Esther Giles, Nyarapayi Giles, Neville Niypula McCarthur, Fred Ward)
praxis ARTSPACE

Ngayulu anu ngayuku mamaku ngurakutu (I went home to my father’s country) (Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll), Hugo Michell Gallery

Ngurra: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (various Western Desert artists), South Australian Museum

Our Corka Bubs (Owen Love, Gina Rings, Caleena Sansbury, Taree Sansbury, Susie Skinner), Port Adelaide Town Hall; presented by Insite Arts and Country Arts SA

Our Mob 2017 (various artists from South Australia)
Adelaide Festival Centre

Peeneeyt Meerreeng (Before/Now/Tomorrow) (Hayley Millar-Baker)
FELTspace

Resistance (Megan Cope), Art Pod; Adelaide City Council

They Came Like a Tsunami (Sandra Saunders), ACE Open

A Thousand Journeys: the Helen Read Collection (various artists)
Flinders University City Gallery

Tjukurpa Stories (various artists)
Hahndorf Academy; presented with Kiri Kiri Art of Victor Harbor

Wandoo Wahpup (Edwin Leigh Mulligan, Clint Dixon), FELTdark

Whipsaw (Archie Moore), Fontanelle

Tarnanthi 2018

John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new (John Mawurndjul), AGSA; presented in association with Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Maningrida Arts and Culture

Tarnanthi 2019

Tarnanthi at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Gurruṯu (Yolŋu artists from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre), AGSA

Bunha-bunhanga: **Aboriginal agriculture in the southeast** (Jonathan Jones, with Bill Gamage, Bruce Pascoe and Zena Cumpston), AGSA and Santos Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden

The Aralya Project (artists from Ninuku Arts)
Adelaide College of the Arts

Ankkinyi Apparr, Ankkinyi Mangurr (artists from Tartukula Artists/ Barkly Arts, State Library of South Australia

Beautiful (Lilla Berry, Pearl Berry, Amber Ahang, Iteka Sanderson Milera, Kirsty Williams, Nikki Ashby, Sascha Budimski, Leticia Ackland), Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute

Blood on the Dance Floor (Jacob Boehme)
Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute

Brave new wave: desert women painters (various artists)
Bay Discovery Centre, Glenelg Town Hall; presented by Flinders University Museum of Art

Dhigaraa galgaa baa – Place of many birds (Penny Evans)
JamFactory

Grandmother Lore (artists from New South Wales)
Migration Museum

Into the light (Thomas Readett, Elizabeth Close)
The Lights Community and Sports Centre, Lightsview

Intrinsic (various artists), Adelaide Town Hall, Art Pod and Adelaide Central Market Arcade; Adelaide City Council in partnership with Carclew

Journey through Culture (various artists), nthspace, Adelaide

Karra wadlu yaitya purruna. Bush shrubs make you healthy (various artists), Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation

Kondoli: the Keeper of Fire (artists from Ngarrindjeri Eco Art Co-op)
South Australian Museum

Milpatjunanyi (Sharon Adamson, Betty Chimney, Lynette Lewis, Mary Katatjuku Pan, Anyupa Stevens, Judith Walkabout, Raelene Walatinna), APY Gallery Adelaide

Mittji (artists from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre)
Hugo Michell Gallery

Mother and Child (Gunybi Ganambarr), JamFactory

Ngalya/Together (artists from Bula’Bula Arts, Durrmu Arts, Milingimbi Art and Culture, Moa Arts, Ngarrindjeri Cultural Weavers, Tjanpi Desert Weavers), SASA Gallery; presented with Koskela



Installation: *Bunha-bunhanga: Aboriginal agriculture in the southeast*, curated by Bill Gamage, Jonathan Jones, Bruce Pascoe and Zena Cumpston; paintings by Eugene von Guérard (Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria), George French Angas and Nicholas Chevalier (AGNSW); wallpaper by Jonathan Jones and Kate Butchart; soundscape with Dr Uncle Stan Grant Snr AM and Luke Mynott; cast objects by Jonathan Jones with Mal Wood; grass seeds, flowers and stone tools (Australian Museum and private collection), Tarnanthi 2019
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed

No Black Seas (artists from Arts Ceduna), ACE Open

Our Country: Many Languages (Clem (Tjunyi) Newchurch, Robert Wuldi, Micky Barlow and artists from Warlukurlangu Art Centre), Fleurieu Arthouse

Painted Stories: Linking country, art and culture for language revival (artists from Aurukun and Pormpuraaw), Hahndorf Academy

Pujurrupi Song Cycle (Leon Russell (Cameron) Black) Tineriba Tribal Gallery

Pungungi Marrgu (old and new) (Regina Pilawuk Wilson), JamFactory

Shackled Excellence (Carly Tarkari Dodd), The Mill

Sovereign Acts: IN THE WAKE (Unbound Collective: Ali Gumillya Baker, Faye Rosas Blanch, Natalie Harkin, Kaitlin Inawantji Morrison, Simone Ulalka Tur), Migration Museum

Spirit Men (David Moolooloo, Stephen Martin Pitjara, Allen Sparrow, Tasman Kleingeld Tjapaltjarri), Royal Adelaide Hospital; Centre for Creative Health

Still in my mind: Gurindji location, experience and visuality (Brenda L. Croft), South Australian Museum; presented as part of a national tour with Artback NT

VIETNAM – ONE IN, ALL IN (various artists) Roxbylink Art Gallery; presented by Country Arts SA

Walka Waru: Ninuku kalawatjanga ungu painta Warm Works: Ninuku painting inside glass (artists from Ninuku Arts), JamFactory

Wanapari: In a line, following one another (artists from Ernabella Arts), JamFactory

Weapons for the Soldier: Protecting Country, Culture and Family (various artists), Murray Bridge Regional Gallery; presented by APY Art Centre Collective and Hazelhurst Arts Centre, as part of a national tour with support of Visions of Australia

Tarnanthi 2020

Tarnanthi 2020: Open Hands (various artists), AGSA

Tarnanthi 2021

Tarnanthi at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Across the generations: 60 years of art making (artists from Kaltjiti Arts), Hahndorf Academy

APRON-SORROW / SOVEREIGN-TEA (Natalie Harkin and collaborating artists), Vitalstatistix

Animating Country (Nora Abbott, Rhonda Sharpe, Doris Thomas, Joanne Wheeler), Migration Museum

Arabana Songlines (Colleen Strangways and collaborating artists) The Lab; presented by Ku Arts and Mobile Language Team

Balgo Beginnings (artists from Warlayirti Artists) South Australian Museum

The Cleansing (Garawan Waṅambi), Hugo Michell Gallery

CSIRO Artist in Residence mural (Cedric Varcoe) CSIRO Waite campus; presented by Guildhouse and CSIRO

Djarrami (mirror, glass) (Djirrirra Wunurṃurra) JamFactory Seppeltsfield

Drifting Sands (Annette Lawrie Dodd Walyingaka, Marli Milyika Macumba, Lavene Ngatokorua, Sandra Saunders, Heather Kemarre Shearer, Yana Tschuna, Jessica Turner; curator Marika Davies) Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery; supported by Country Arts SA

Earth Magic (Kunwinjku artists from Injalak Arts and Tiwi artists from Munupi Arts), Tineriba Fine Arts and AIARTS Gallery

Iriti-nguru nintini kuwari-kutu (Showing the past in the present) (artists from Ernabella Arts), praxis ARTSPACE

LT3 (Elizabeth Yanyi Close, Shane Cook, Thomas Readett) Hahndorf Academy

Minymangku punu palyani (Women doing punu) (artists from Maruku Arts), JamFactory

Mirdilyyanthi (To shine bright) (Grace Bennett, Elizabeth Yanyi Close, Shane Cook, Thomas Readett, Jackie Saunders) Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation; presented by Women’s & Children’s Hospital Foundation

My Country, My Identity (Sasha Hill), Fleurieu Arthouse

Ngalkunburriyaymi (Yawkyawk Dreaming) (Anniebell Marrngamarrnga), JamFactory

Ngayuku Kamiku Ngayuku Tjukurpa: My Grandmother, My Story (Selinda Davidson, Molly Nampitjin Miller), JamFactory Seppeltsfield

Ngayulu nyanganyi ngura winki (I can see all those places) (Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll), Yarta Purtli, Port Augusta Cultural Centre; presented by JamFactory

Ngura Pulka – Epic Country (artists from APY Art Centre Collective) APY Gallery Adelaide

Nurna yaarna iltjerrama. Nurna kutatha mpaarama! (We can’t stop making) (artists from Yarrenyty Arltere), JamFactory

Rekkan / Tamuwu / Nyinakati (sit) (Raylene Bonson, Roslyn Orsto, Keturah Nangala Zimran), JamFactory

Sovereign sisters: domestic work (various artists) Flinders University Museum of Art

The Space Between Us: Finding the way back to the present (Tony Wilson), Fleurieu Arthouse

STAUNCH: an exploration of Aboriginal Queer Liberation (Ali Gumillya Baker, Natalie Harkin, Wanitjari Juanita Sumner, Kym Michael Wanganeen, Peter Waples Crowe, Arika Waulu, Alison Whittaker, Raymond Zada), Nexus Arts

STRNG WMN (Lilla Berry), The Mill

WATER RITES (Libby Harward, Archie Moore, Mandy Quadrio) ACE Open

Women on Country: Connections & Dreamings (women artists from South Australia), Kurna Living cultural Centre

Wonnarua (Ryan Andrew Lee), FELTspace

Yes, I Am Musical (Troy-Anthony Baylis), Hugo Michell Gallery

Yia Ngkarrama (Telling Stories) (artists from Hermannsburg Potters) Adelaide Railway Station; presented by JamFactory

Tarnanthi 2022

Embassy (Richard Bell), AGSA; coinciding with the world premiere of *You Can Go Now: Richard Bell* in partnership with the Adelaide Film Festival

Going Out Bush (Vincent Namatjira), AGSA; in partnership with Illuminate Adelaide

Wild Dog (Jacob Boehme and collaborating artists) Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute; presented by Country Arts SA and Insite Arts

Tarnanthi 2023

Tarnanthi at the Gallery (various artists), AGSA

Vincent Namatjira: Australia in colour (Vincent Namatjira), AGSA

Regional Tarnanthi: Saltbush Country (Josephine Lennon, Juanella McKenzie, Marli Milyika Macumba, Deanna Newchurch, Lynette Newchurch, Sandra Saunders, Heather Kamarra Shearer; curator Marika Davies), Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery and Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, UniSA City West; presented in partnership with Country Arts SA and AGSA. Touring statewide 2024–26

Arrpmarnintja – Creation from the beginning (artists from Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre) Museum of Economic Botany, Adelaide Botanic Garden

Art of Tiwi artists of Munupi (artists from Tiwi Islands) AIARTS Gallery

Bunganditj Kala! Yankunytjatjara Wangka! Keeping Ancestral Voices Alive (Belinda Bonney, Leshia Goldsmith, Myra Kumantjara with First Nations students from southeastern South Australia) South Australian Museum; presented by Aboriginal Living Languages Cooperative

Ceramic Warka Wiru 20 Years-kutu (20 Years of Creating Ceramics) (artists from Ernabella Arts), JamFactory

4th National Indigenous Art Triennial: Ceremony a selection of moving image works by Joel Bray, Hayley Miller Baker and Gutinjarra Yunupingu from the national tour presented by the Adelaide Film Festival at Samstag Museum of Art in partnership with the NGA.

Footprints (artists from Kurna Women’s Art Collective) The Packing Shed, Harts Mill, Port Adelaide

Goyurr – Journey (artists from Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre) praxis ARTSPACE; presented by Salon Art Projects

GROUNDswell (various artists), The Odeon, Norwood; presented by Australian Dance Theatre

Gulayi: Woven in the Womb (Chantal Henley, Caleena Sansbury, Jimblah Cubillo), The Mill

Kumpilpa Ngaranyi – Unseen (Timo Hogan) Light Square Gallery; presented by Salon Art Projects

Land, Light and Water (Jackie Saunders), Royal Adelaide Hospital; presented by The Hospital Research Foundation Group – Creative Health

Layers of Blak (various artists) JamFactory Seppeltsfield; presented by Koorie Heritage Trust

mane djang karirra: the place where the dreaming changed shape (artists from Maningrida Arts and Culture) Flinders University Museum of Art

Milpatjunanyi (various artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands), APY Gallery Adelaide

Mudlirna (James Tylor), JamFactory

Nganawi Ngarrindjeri ruwi: Feeling like a bird flying over Country (Cedric Varcoe), Hahndorf Academy

One of many (Carly Tarkari Dodd), Post Office Projects

PETER WAPLES-CROWE: PRIDE (Peter Waples-Crowe, Tyberius Larking, Alfred Lowe, Jayda Wilson), Adelaide Contemporary Experimental

Rising Sun (Lavene Ngatokorua, Chris Herzfeld and collaborating artists), Light Adelaide

Spaces Between (Sonya Rankine) Adelaide Railway Station; presented by JamFactory

UV Songlines: Illuminating ancestral roots (Colleen Strangways)
Ballarat International Foto Biennale and FELTspace

Walka Waltja Nganampa: These are our own designs
(artists from Iwirri Wellbeing Centre), JamFactory

Wandjina Country (artists from Kira Kiro Artists)
Tineriba Tribal Gallery

What Matters to Me (First Nations children from South Australia)
Women's & Children's Hospital; presented by Women's & Children's
Hospital Foundation

Yarta Wandatha: Story tells of Land (artists from Tjarutja Dance
Theatre Collective), APY Gallery Adelaide

Z munu A Titutjara (Zaachariaha Fielding, Alfred Lowe)
Hugo Mitchell Gallery

Tarnanthi on tour

2020-23

Kulata Tjuta European international tour:
works by thirty-four artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara Lands; presented in partnership with
APY Art Centre Collective

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, Brittany, France
16 October 2020 – 3 January 2021

Musées d'Art et d'Histoire, Le Havre, Normandy, France
5 June – 7 November 2021

Australian Embassy, Berlin, Germany
8 June – 28 October 2022

Australian Embassy, Paris, France
4 April – 25 August 2023

2021-23

Kulata Tjuta USA international tour:
the installation *Kulata Tjuta*, created by fifty-nine Anangu
Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara artists, formed the centrepiece of the
exhibition *Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology*, co-curated by
Erin Vink, AGNSW

IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe,
New Mexico, USA
20 August 2021 – 10 July 2022

Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum, Saginaw, Michigan, USA
10 September – 10 December 2022

Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, California, USA
27 January – 11 June 2023

El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, USA
28 July – 12 November 2023

Naomi Hobson: Adolescent Wonderland statewide tour:
photographic works by Naomi Hobson, touring to eleven venues in
South Australia; presented in partnership with Country Arts SA

Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery, Tarparrie/Port Pirie, SA
11 December 2021 – 27 March 2022

Port Augusta Yarta Purtili Gallery, Kurdnatta/Port Augusta, SA
19 April – 5 June 2022

Nautilus Arts Centre, Galinyala/Port Lincoln, SA
10 June – 24 July 2022

Roxbylink Art Gallery, Kokatha/Roxby Downs, SA
29 July – 18 September 2022

Chaffey Theatre, Erawirung/Renmark, SA
23 September – 13 November 2022

Riddoch Art Gallery, Bungandit/Mount Gambier, SA
18 November 2022 – 22 January 2023

Naracoorte Regional Art Gallery, Naracoorte, SA
27 January – 26 February 2022

Walkway Gallery, Tatiara/Bordertown, SA
3 March – 22 April 2023

Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, Pomeruk/Murray Bridge, SA
28 April – 18 June 2023

Burra Regional Art Gallery, Kooringa/Burra, SA
23 June – 30 July 2023

Hahndorf Academy, Bukartilla/Hahndorf, SA
1 September – 8 October 2023

2022-24

Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women) national tour:
works by sixty-one women artists from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara Lands

Ngununggula, Bowral, NSW
22 October – 11 December 2022

Maitland Regional Art Gallery, NSW
4 March – 21 May 2023

HOTA Gallery, Gold Coast, Queensland
17 June – 27 August 2023

Geelong Gallery, Victoria
21 October 2023 – 25 February 2024

Bunjil Place Gallery, Narre Warren, Victoria
2 April – 21 July 2024

2024

Vincent Namatjira: Australia in colour national tour:
the first survey exhibition of the work of Vincent Namatjira

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
2 March – 21 July 2024



Naomi Hobson: Adolescent Wonderland international tour:
photographic works by Naomi Hobson; presented in
partnership with DFAT/Australian Embassy Morocco and the
Moroccan Fondational Nationale des Musées

Musée National de la Photographie, Rabat, Morocco
20 May – 10 July 2024

2024-26

Saltbush Country statewide tour:
works by seven independent regional artists, created as part
of the award-winning Regional Tarnanthi project; presented in
partnership with Country Arts SA

Nautilus Arts Centre, Galinyala/Port Lincoln, SA
29 June – 26 July 2024

Signal Point Experience Gallery, Goolwa, SA
14 December 2024 – 26 January 2025

Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, Pomeruk/Murray Bridge, SA
1 February – 6 April 2025

Walkway Gallery, Tatiara/Bordertown, SA
21 June – 2 August 2025

Ascot Gallery, Kadina, SA
9 – 30 August 2025

Riddoch Art Gallery, Bungandit/Mount Gambier, SA
8 November 2025 – 18 January 2026

Roxbylink Art Gallery, Kokatha/Roxby Downs, SA
28 February – 26 April 2026

Broken Hill Regional Gallery, Broken Hill, NSW
8 May – 26 July 2026

Burra Regional Art Gallery, Kooringa/Burra, SA
1 – 30 August 2026

Fabrik, Lobethal, SA
4 September – 11 October 2026

2026-28

Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi national tour:
a selection of works from *Too Deadly* at AGSA touring to six
regional venues nationally, including Rockhampton Museum of
Art and Caboolture Regional Art Gallery (Queensland); Maitland
Regional Art Gallery and Ngununggula Southern Highlands Regional
Gallery (NSW), Geelong Gallery (Victoria) and Lawrence Wilson Art
Gallery (WA)

Artists Marli Macumba, Sandra Saunders, Juanella McKenzie,
Heather Shearer, Josephine Lennon, Deanna Newchurch and Lynette
Newchurch at the *Saltbush Country* exhibition opening at Port Pirie
Regional Art Gallery, South Australia, as part of Tarnanthi Festival 2023
photo: Sam Roberts

Contributors

Contributors

Glenn Adamson is a curator, writer and historian based in New York and London. He is Curator at Large for the Vitra Design Museum in Germany, Artistic Director for Qatar’s biennial Design Doha festival and editor of the quarterly online journal *Material Intelligence*. He most recently authored *A Century of Tomorrows* (2024).

Andrew Allen is a ceramic artist and potter with over thirty-five years experience, who lives in southwestern Victoria. His main focus is functional stoneware pottery and he has experience in woodfired pottery, raku firing and primitive firing techniques.

Alec Baker is a senior Yankunytjatjara leader and co-founder of Iwantja Arts in Indulkana in the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. A former stockman and now an acclaimed artist, he is still dedicated to his painting practice at the age of ninety-three.

Dr Ali Gumillya Baker is a Mirning woman who is a multidisciplinary artist and educator employed as an Associate Professor in Critical Indigenous Studies at Flinders University. She is a member of the artist group Unbound Collective.

Angkuna Baker is a leading Pitjantjatjara artist at Iwantja Arts in Indulkana in the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. A senior Elder and cultural custodian in the community, she supports children’s education through cultural excursions, bush trips and instructing inma (traditional song and dance).

Kat Bell is a Gudjula and Girramay artist, writer and curator. She explores identity through digital, textile and animation. Her immersive works blend culture, technology and storytelling.

Dan Bleby is a translator and language educator at Iwiri Aboriginal Corporation.

Audrey Brumby is a Pitjantjatjara woman, born in Ernabella on the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. She was a school teacher there for many years, and now resides in Adelaide. She has been a dedicated member of Iwiri Arts since its inception.

Dr Andrea Bubenik is an expert in Renaissance and Baroque art and the continued reception of early modern visual culture. She is an associate professor in art history in the School of Communication and Arts, University of Queensland.

Maringka Burton is a respected senior artist whose practice includes painting and tjanpi (native grass) weaving. She is a highly regarded ngangkari (traditional healer) and senior Elder in Indulkana, in the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Nyunmiti Burton is an artist and community leader from Amata in the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, now based in Adelaide. She has many years of experience in community governance, including as vice-chairperson of NPY Women’s Council and director of the APY Art Centre Collective.

Contributors

Freja Carmichael is a curator and writer belonging to the Ngugi people of Quandamooka Country. She is currently curator at the University of Queensland Art Museum.

Dameeli Coates is a curator, textile artist and researcher. She is a Wakka Wakka woman who grew up on Kurna Yarta. Her work examines Indigenous identities, memory and collective sense of belonging. She uses sound, natural fibre and mixed media.

Claire G. Coleman is a Wirlomin Noongar poet, essayist, novelist and nonfiction author who has written several books. Her art writing has appeared in catalogues for state and national art galleries and in periodicals, including *Art Collector* and *Artlink*.

Shane Cook is a proud Wulli Wulli and Koa (Guwa) man with many connections throughout Queensland. He was born on Kurna Yerta (Kurna Country/Adelaide), where he works as an artist with a contemporary style shaped by graffiti culture, murals and tattooing.

Celia Coulthard is an Adnyamathanha woman, arts worker, event producer and occasional practitioner of paper and word-based art. She lives and works on unceded Peramangk and Kurna lands.

Roy Coulthard is an Adnyamathanha elder, former stockman and master carver from the northern Flinders Ranges in South Australia. He has been hand-carving since he was ten. Now retired, he is passing carving and cultural knowledge to a younger generation.

Valerie Cullinan is a painter of long standing at Iwantja Arts in Indulkana in the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. Fluent in Yankunytjatjara, Pitjantjatjara and English, she works with many remote services supporting translation and education programs.

Nici Cumpston OAM is of Barkandji, Afghan, Irish and English descent and has been Artistic Director of Tarnanthi since 2015. She is the Director of Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Museum of the University of Virginia in the United States, after previously being Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at AGSA from 2008 to 2025.

Zena Cumpston is of Barkandji, Afghan, Irish and English heritage. She lives in Naarm (Melbourne) and works as an artist, writer, consultant and storyteller. She is a member of the Birrarung Council and the 2025–26 Creative Australia Leadership Program. Her practice is grounded in storytelling as a means to platform and empower Country and community.

Sonja (Jonas) Dare is a Barngarla, Kokatha and Wirangu artist from South Australia, whose interdisciplinary visual works – including digital media, photography, paint, filmmaking and leadlight – explore socio-cultural, environmental and political issues affecting Aboriginal people.

Contributors

Marika Davies is a Wangkanurru and Dieri curator and mixed-media artist who lives and works in Port Augusta. She is Tarnanthi Regional Curator with Country Arts SA and the Art Gallery of South Australia, working to support the careers of regional First Nations artists.

Carly Tarkari Dodd is a Kurna, Narungga and Ngarrindjeri artist and curator based on Kurna Country. She is the Assistant Curator of Tarnanthi at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Kathy Dodd is a Pitjantjatjara artist based in Mimili, South Australia. A skilled tjanpi (grass) weaver since 2010, she creates vibrant sculptures and wall works inspired by desert life. She also works with Maruku Arts and Mimili Maku Arts.

Sheena Dodd is a Pitjantjatjara artist from Sandy Bore, now based in Mimili, South Australia. The daughter of senior Elders, Sheena was raised with a deep connection to her culture and Country, reflected in her artistry across fibre and canvas.

Jo-Anne Driessens is a descendant of the Koa, Gungarri and Kuku Yalanji peoples of Queensland. A practising photographer for thirty years, she has applied her holistic skills to specialised projects related to curatorial frameworks, historical and contemporary research experience, and community and cultural protocol principles.

Ali Cobby Eckermann is an award-winning Yankunytjatjara poet and Stolen Generations survivor. Her poetry is influenced by her love for Country. Her first collection, *little bit long time*, was written in the desert and launched her literary career in 2009. Her latest release, *she is the earth*, was NSW Literary Book of the Year in 2024.

Tiarnie Edwards is a Ngarrindjeri artist who currently works out of the APY Gallery studio, Adelaide. Born in Kurna Yarta in 1998, Tiarnie is also an emerging curator and arts writer.

Patricia Fatt is a Yankunytjatjara/Kokatha artist from Umoona Art Centre in Coober Pedy. She says: ‘I’ve been painting for a long time. It helps me relax, brings my family together and helps us connect with our culture. I paint Women’s story. I paint about my Country.’

Eugenia Flynn is a Larrakia, Tiwi, Chinese Malaysian and Muslim writer and researcher.

Rebecca Freezer is a curator and arts writer based on Kurna Country. She is curator at the City of Adelaide. Her curatorial practice is grounded in partnership, cultural exchange and supporting the work of First Nations artists.

Garry Goldsmith is a proud Narungga man from Guuranda (Yorke Peninsula), South Australia. He is a former chair of Narungga Nations Aboriginal Corporation and currently managing director of Miri Kawi Services.

Contributors

Tom Golin is a metal artist based in Tarntanya (Adelaide). As head of the Jewellery and Metal studio at JamFactory, he explores the space that combines industrial materials and processes with sculptural forms.

Jay Gonsalves is an Eastern Arrernte and Arabana musician and arts worker from Port Pirie, South Australia, who currently works as an associate producer at Country Arts SA. His practice includes solo and collaborative projects as a musician, producer and composer.

Dominic Guerrera is a Ngarrindjeri and Kurna writer, artist and arts worker. He predominantly works within the mediums of poetry, text-based works and ceramics and is the First Nations Editor at *Cordite Review*.

Louise Hamby is a cultural heritage consultant and visiting researcher from Australian National University. Her current projects include working with Numbulwar Numburindi Arts and as co-editor of *Volume 9: Ceremonial and Ritual Textiles for Bloomsbury World Textile Encyclopedia*. Material culture with an emphasis on textiles has been the focus of many of her publications.

Natalie Harkin is a Narungga woman, poet and senior research fellow at Flinders University.

Tristen Harwood is a Boorloo-born art critic and writer of Aboriginal and European heritage, living on unceded Wurundjeri Country in Naarm. He is a lecturer at the Victorian College of the Arts and a senior editor of *Memo*.

Maya Hodge is a Lardil curator and writer passionate about amplifying First People’s storytelling through arts and editorial projects grounded in community values, sisterhood and care. In 2022 she co-curated *Collective Movements* at Monash University Museum of Art and in 2024 curated *These Arms Hold* at Incinerator Gallery, Naarm (Melbourne).

Dr Jessyca Hutchens is a Palyku woman living and working on Noongar boodja, a lecturer at the School of Indigenous Studies and a Co-Director at the Berndt Museum at the University of Western Australia. Jessyca is an art historian and curator.

Talitha Kennedy is an artist and arts worker based in Naarm (Melbourne). She has worked with black leather since 2007, making sculptures, installations and drawings to embody the fraught intimacy with the natural world, and has exhibited widely across Australia.

Karina Lester is a Yankunytjatjara woman from the An̄angu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands and a speaker and writer of her Yankunytjatjara wangka (language). She has ties with the APY Lands, Uluru, Finke and Coober Pedy regions.

Jane Llewellyn is a freelance writer and editor, with past roles including editor of *Australian Art Collector* magazine and arts writer for *The Adelaide Review*. She is a regular contributor to *InReview* and currently works at APY Gallery, Adelaide.

Regina McKenzie is Luritja/Lower Southern Arrernte and Kuyani/Walpi woman who has been strong in culture all her life. She is a respected Elder and knowledge holder who passes knowledge onto younger generations, in particular her daughter and grandchildren.

Marisa Maher is a Western Aranda woman who is Manager and Curator at Ittja Ntjarra Many Hands art centre, Mparntwe (Alice Springs). She has played a key role in curation of Ittja Ntjarra's project and worked closely with artists to produce works for Tarnanthi 2025.

Kunmanara (Peter) Mungkuri was a former stockman who became a dedicated artist, whose paintings detailed his extensive knowledge of Country and Anangu culture. He was a highly respected Elder and leader in his community of Indulkana and throughout the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Rhubee Neale is a proud Anmatyerre and Arrernte woman from Mparntwe (Alice Springs), now living on Kurna Country. An award-winning artist, singer-songwriter and speaker, she uses art and music to promote resilience, healing and cultural celebration. In 2024 she was named NAIDOC SA Artist of the Year.

Jill Newman manages the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation Arts in Health program at the Women's & Children's Hospital/Ngangkiku Ngartuku Kukuwardli, a place of health that cares for women, babies, children and young people in Adelaide.

Sandra Pumani is a respected community leader and artist from Mimili community in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. With a long career in education and advocacy, she began painting in 2022 and now serves as Chairperson of the APY Art Centre Collective.

Pirrawayingi Puruntatameri is Traditional Owner and senior Elder of the Munupi clan of the Tiwi Islands.

rea is a gamilaraay, wailwan and biripi artist, curator and academic from the Central West of New South Wales. Their experimental research-led creative practice is informed by the digital arts and deeply grounded in lived cultural experiences and knowledge systems.

Dr Una Rey is a freelance writer, an occasional artist and curator, and editor of *Artlink* magazine.

Jenna Richards (Sambo) is a proud Barngarla/Gubran woman, creative writer and contemporary artist who was born and lives in Galinyala (Port Lincoln). Her time is dedicated to telling stories through various mediums – acrylics, inks, watercolours, digital art and design of public art installations.

Lavinia Richards is a proud Barngarla/Wirangu Elder from Port Lincoln, South Australia. She has studied creative writing at UniSA, textile design at Batchelor College and is driven to share her story of being part of the Stolen Generation through poetry and her artwork.

Vera Richards (Sambo) is a proud Barngarla/Gubran woman living in Galinyala (Port Lincoln). A contemporary artist, she has painted since her teenage years and continuously works to hone her craft, learning different mediums and always with a project on the go. Vera uses her paintings to pass down stories of old.

Sophia Sambono (Nampitjinpa) is an Irish, Scottish and Jingili woman with family connections from Elliott/Newcastle Waters to Darwin, Daly River and the Tiwi Islands. She is the Associate Curator, Indigenous Australian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art.

Leda Sivak is a non-Indigenous academic health researcher, who has worked with diverse Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, both as an anthropologist and health researcher, since 2006. Her connections with Barngarla individuals and communities, including a five-year health and wellbeing study, date from 2011.

Emma Singer is a Pitjantjatjara artist from Mimili, South Australia. A mother of two, Tjanpi Desert Weaver, emerging painter and the youngest director of Mimili Maku Arts, she is passionate about education and supporting strong futures for young people.

Priscilla Singer is Anangu Coordinator at Indulkana Anangu School in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. As an artist she has worked across diverse mediums at Iwantja Arts and is a dedicated painter and leader of women's collaborative projects.

Tanya Singer is a minyma Anangu (Anangu woman) who is a highly skilled punu (wood) artist. Instructed in traditional carving by her grandmothers, aunts and mothers, she brings her own flair and attention to detail in her work.

Professor Lisa Slade is the Hugh Ramsay Chair in Australian Art History in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Between 2015 and 2024 she was Assistant Director, Artistic Programs, at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Beth Sometimes is a Pākehā artist, interpreter/translator and organiser from Aotearoa New Zealand living in Arrernte Country. Her labours are concerned with economies of attention. She collaborates with custodians on projects that give vitality to the languages and knowledges of Pitjantjatjara and Arrernte Country.

Gloria Strzelecki is Acting Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is a social enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, which enables women living in the remote Central and Western Desert regions to earn an income from fibre art.

Angelika Tyrone is director of AIARTS Gallery in Belair on Kurna Country, South Australia, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. She is a consultant, curator and former lecturer in visual art and digital arts.

Ellen van Neerven is a writer and editor of Mununjali and Dutch heritage. Ellen's books include *Heat and Light*, *Comfort Food*, *Throat* and *Personal Score*.

Erin Vink is a Ngiyampaa curator and visual arts publishing administrator living on Gadigal Country. She works as Senior Curator, First Nations art (local and global) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

Pauline Wangin is a Pitjantjatjara artist from Mimili, South Australia. She enjoys making fibre sculptures depicting the animals she sees living on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. She also paints for Mimili Maku Arts and is a keen supporter of activities in her community.

David Wickens has worked in Arnhem Land for the past twelve years, both with Injalak Arts in the west and currently as a coordinator with Buku-Larrnggay Mulka in the northeast.

Eliza Wuttke is an artist and arts worker living and working in Galinyala (Port Lincoln). Her work is inspired by place and holds community at its core.

Julie Yangki is a Pitjantjatjara artist from Mimili, South Australia. She has been a skilled tjanpi (grass) weaver for over a decade and her intricate and sought-after work has been exhibited widely. Julie is a strong cultural woman in her community and a superb traditional dancer.

Danni Zuvella, born on Magandjin Country and shaped by Quandamooka Country, now lives and works on Kurna Yerta. She is the Artistic Director of Adelaide Contemporary Experimental gallery.



Layne Dhu-Dickie, Banyjima people, Western Australia, born South Hedland, Western Australia 2004
Captain Hedland versus The Fisherman, 2017–18, South Hedland, Western Australia
fibre-tipped pen on paper, thirty-four pages, 42.0 × 28.0 cm (each)
Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2018
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
© Layne Dhu-Dickie/Spinifex Hill Studio

Artistic Director's Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the beautiful Country where Tarnanthi is celebrated and to pay my deep respect to their Elders, their communities and their young people. I honour their ongoing cultural responsibilities to nurture and care for Country and the tireless work they do in bringing the next generations along to be the cultural custodians of the future.

As human beings, we are all responsible for caring for Country, and together we can learn how to be respectful of each other through collectively nurturing and respecting our shared Country.

What has become increasingly more evident in my life is that success comes from time spent building honest, open relationships.

Tarnanthi has been a journey of over twelve years that ultimately has taught me how deep respect comes from open conversations of listening and learning, ngapartji ngapartji. In the Pitjantjatjara language, ngapartji ngapartji is an expression that means to give and receive equally; it is a concept of reciprocity and mutual exchange.

Tarnanthi is about providing a platform for dreams and visions to be realised. It enables artists to have time to think, to contemplate, to dream and to imagine.

One thing is certain, there will always be artists who need a platform. Through inclusion in its exhibitions and collections, the state institution is a pinnacle in an artist's trajectory, and it is also a place that can nurture and grow talent if the time is taken to gain an understanding and to build trusting relationships with artists. Not all people are viewed as equal, but we all equally need respect and nurturing to grow and shine in our own career pathway.

Thank you to all the artists, and their teams, for their faith and belief in us and for making the work that we can see here and celebrate. Thank you to the incredible team at AGSA and our presenting partners, who have worked closely to understand and enable this vision to come to fruition. The success of Tarnanthi is a result of many busy hands and minds coming together with deep respect and care for each other.

Nici Cumpston OAM

Installation view featuring woven ghost-net works by artists from Erub Arts in The Studio, Tarnanthi 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
photo: Saul Steed



AGSA

AGSA Kurna yartangka yuwanthi

AGSA stands on Kurna land

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cover, detail: Betty Campbell, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born Everard Park Station, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 1961, *Minymaku Tjukurpa (Woman's Story)*, 2023, Mimili, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on linen, 198.0 × 152.0 cm; South Australian Artists Fund 2024. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

© Betty Campbell, courtesy of Mimili Maku Artists

endpapers, detail: Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, Pitjantjatjara/Luritja people, South Australia/Northern Territory, born Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory 1950, died Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia 2021, *Walungurru*, 2014, Pukatja (Ernabella), Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122.0 × 182.0 cm; Acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2016 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

© Kunmanara (Pepai) Carroll, courtesy Ernabella Arts

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