Malaluba GUMANA
Dhalwangu/Nungburundi peoples
born 1952, Gangan, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Garrimala [Hollow log]
2006, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on wood

The Rotary Collection of Australian Art Fund 2007, in memory of Philip McElligott AM, MBA, and in celebration of the National Gallery of Australia’s 25th Anniversary 2007.1276

This larrakitj, painted with a very fine exponent of marwatthe (cross hatching also known as rarrk) technique using a ‘hair brush’. GUMANA mainly paints her mother’s Galpu clan designs of dhatam (waterlily), djari (rainbow), djayku (filesnake) and wititj (olive python).

Born in 1952, Malaluba Gumana dedicates most of her artworks to portraying her mother Marratj Gurruwiwi’s Galpu clan designs of dhatam (waterlily), djari (rainbow), djayku (filesnake) and wititj (olive python). Malaluba demonstrates a very fine ‘marwat’, a cross hatching technique that utilises a fine hairbrush, to paint on bark and memorial poles. In 2006, her local Art Centre encouraged her to produce larger and more complex works to further explore her spontaneous and fluid hand, an opportunity she wholeheartedly embraced.

Story:
Malaluba’s paintings represent Garrimala, a billabong near where she lives, the Dhawau clan homeland at Gaga. It is a sacred site for the artists’ mother’s Galpu clan.
Wititj is the all powerful rainbow serpent (olive python) that travelled through Galpu clan lands and on further, during the days of early times called Waarr. Djayku the Javanese filesnake is a companion and possibly alternate incarnation of Wititj, living in amongst the Dhatam, or waterlilies, causing ripples and rainbows (Djari) on the surface of the water (one reference in the cross hatch).
(Acknowledgements Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association)
Dhuwarrwarr MARIKA
Rirratjingu/Miluwurrwurr peoples, Dhuwa moiety
born c.1946, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Milngurr
2006, Yirrkala, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark and hollow logs


Dhuwarrwarr is the sister of Wandjuk, Banygul and Banduk Marika, and daughter of Mawalan, the Rirratjingu clan leader who originally welcomed the missionaries to set up on his land, creating the beginnings of modern day Yirrkala.

"From that time when my father was painting my elder sister helped him but she is a little blind now. From when I was twelve to this time I started to paint. Sometimes I used to help my father. That one (her nephew Mawalan #2) he learned from grandfather and his father. He watched his grandfather - that my father. Currently I'm doing my own art using the same design and lino printing - my fathers design but my own imagination. When my father was alive they only painted on bark. I use my own colours from the shore - the yellow and the red, just a rock, and the black, bayau (not) charcoal. Like my brother (Wandjuk), I sometimes mix yellow and black to make green. Like this one (holds a loaf of white clay) I used to go and get it in a bucket and mash it up and leave it in the sun to dry. I am trying hard to get this man (Mawalan#2) to come back to do the painting.

(Artist statement)

Story:
The time referred to as the time before the first morning has the Djan'kawu (a man and his two sisters) leaving in a canoe to follow the morning star from their residence of Buralku, an island of ancestral dead. With them they carried dilly bags, mats and digging sticks that were to later manifest into sacred objects through ritual of song and dance that started on the sea of travel and into the sand dunes rimming the landing shores of Yalangbara. From Yalangbara the Djan'kawu set out on their epic journey of eastern Arnhem Land, travelling on what they sanctified as Dhuwa land, singing the country and splitting it up into clan estates, designating sacred law (Mardayin) song, dance, totem, language to each as they went. Thus the one side of the duality that governs the Yolngu of Arnhem Land - the two moiety systems of the Dhuwa and the Yirritja, emanated from Yalangbara. Today on the sandy beach at Yalangbara freshwater is found. By digging at the right location the freshwater seeps through the sand pooling in the hole dug. Rirratjingu song cycles celebrate the Djan'kawu creating this well by plunging the sacred Mawalan (digging stick) into this area as they strode up the beach with their possessions to the sand dunes further up. This well with water of sacred and special qualities called Milngurr. These sisters gave birth to all Dhuwa clans starting here. Affected by salt on their sea journey and the incursion of freshwater at Yalangbara, the mixing of the two was the catalyst for procreation. Today the tides of the sea and flow of freshwater are sung to explain and ensure the cycles of conception, birth and death of the Rirratjingu from their clan lands (Yalangbara) to relate specifically to the powers of the Djan'kawu and the land they affected for the Dhuwa.

(Acknowledgements Buku-Larrnggay Mulka)
Naminapu MAYMURU-WHITE
Manggallili people
born 1952, Yirrkala Mission, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Milniyawuy [Milky Way]
2004, Yirrkala, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on hollow log

Gift of Roslynne Bracher 2005  2005.295

Naminapu MAYMURU-WHITE was born a member of the Mangalili clan, at the Yirrkala mission station in Northeast Arnhem Land in 1952. After attending the mission school, she worked for some time in the store and craft shop and also helped out in the local bank. When the Homeland Centre of Gurka’wuy was established in 1973, MAYMURU-WHITE went to live there with her husband and young family of three children. These were the early days of the Homeland Movement which included the establishment by Narritjin of the Mangalili homeland of Djarrakpi. When she later married Leon White, a teacher in the Northern Territory, MAYMURU-WHITE went to live for several years in Melbourne and Darwin. In 1985, MAYMURU-WHITE returned with her husband and family to live in Yirrkala, now no longer a mission station but a locally governed Aboriginal community.

MAYMURU-WHITE’s major interest is her art. She is an extremely versatile artist with skills in the areas of painting, carving, screen-printing, weaving, lino-cuts and batik work. As a child she used to sit for hours patiently watching her father paint. At about the age of 12, she began to learn herself, and was fortunate in being taught by her father’s brother, Narritjin Maymuru, as well as by her own father, Nånyin Maymuru.

As one of the first Yolngu women to be taught to paint miny’tji (sacred creation clan designs) she was part of the historic adaptations by the elders of the Yolngu in the last forty years which included the revelation of previously restricted designs in pursuit of justice in the Land Rights struggle (for example, The Bark Petition, The Yirrkala Church Panels).

Story:
MAYMURU-WHITE depicts the Milky Way on her work.

One of her memorial poles with the Milniyawuy or Milky Way design won the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D award at the 2005 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. (Acknowledgements Buku-Larrnggay Mulka and the artists)
Lena NYADBI
Gija/Kija people, Nyawurru subsection
born c. 1936, Greenvale Station, East Kimberley Western Australia

Dayiwul Ngarankarni
2008, Warmun, East Kimberley, Western Australia
natural earth pigments on canvas
Purchased 2008 2008.681

Lena Nyadbi was born on Walmanjilukum (Greenvale Station) and grew up on Old Lissadell Station in East Kimberley, Western Australia. Like other young Aboriginal girls she was put to work on the station at an early age. She moved to the new Lissadell Station when it was relocated due to the development of Lake Argyle, and it was there she met her first husband, Ben Bandi. Nyadbi spent many years watching and learning from some renowned Warmun artists who have now passed away, in particular Paddy Jaminji, who taught her the techniques of grinding ochre and charcoal, and of rubbing the charcoal into the canvas with her hands. However, Nyadbi did not start painting until 1998. Nyadbi has painted at the Warmun Art Centre since it commenced operation in August 1998 and has developed an international reputation as an original and dynamic painter. Nyadbi is one of eight artists featured in the Musée du quai Branly project, which opened in Paris in 2006 and was a close colleague with the late Paddy Bedford and late Hector Jandany.

Story:
The long white shape is the spinifex net made by the three women in the Ngarrangkarni (Dreaming). They traveled up the river placing the net across the water to catch the fish. Halfway to Gawinji (Cattle Creek) the women stopped and left the net at this place, it turned to stone. This place was destroyed when the Argyle Diamond Mine was first cut. The large brown shapes are Ngarrangkarni rocks that were removed and shifted to a place higher up where they remain today. Nyadbi says there also used to be a creek here and a soak where Gija people used to dig down into the ground for water when other waterholes had dried up. The diamonds mined today are the scales of Dayiwul the barramundi who jumped through the range to escape capture by the three women. She saw the net they had placed in the river and jumped over it. These sites have been destroyed by the pit of the open-cut mine. Nyadbi has made this work to remember this country before the mine and to pass these stories and this history on to her children and grandchildren.

(Acknowledgements Chapman Gallery)
Angampa MARTIN
Pitjantjatjara people
born Australia 1935, Irrunytju, Western Australia

Wati Kutjara (Two Men)
2006 Irrunytju, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2006  2006.896

Angampa Martin was born in the 1940s at Watala, a rockhole south-east of Irrunytju and south-west of Pipalyatjara near the tri-border conjunction of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. She is a senior Pitjantjatjara artist. Drawing on the intimate knowledge of her traditional homelands gained from a lifetime’s experience of living on and being responsible for country, Angampa refers to aspects of *Wati Kutjara Tjukurpa* (Two Water-snake Men Dreaming) in her work.

*My country, and my father’s country is Wati Kutjara Tjukurpa (Two Water-snake Men Dreaming). I grew up there at a rockhole called Umal. Kaliny-kalinypa (honey grevillea) grows there.*

As a teenager Angampa settled at Ernabella with her family and learnt weaving and rug-making. However, Angampa has only been painting since the early 2000s and is associated with the fast-rising Irrunytju Arts community, participating in regular group exhibitions. Her work is visually stunning and has garnered great interest. She uses an iridescent palette to depict her *tjukurpa* revealing the epic journey of the two men; showing the contours of the land and referring to sacred sites where the events happened. While the imagery and narrative are traditional, Angampa uses vivid, contrasting colours to evoke the intensity of the narrative.

**Story:**
Two men, a father and son, travelled across the country from rockhole to rockhole. On their way to Pirulungka they turned in water-snakes. The father left his son at a big rockhole to grow up, but the *anangu* [people] there did not want him to stay. They thought he was odd because he was awkward, looked strange and had big googly eyes. They were cruel to him, did not share their food and made it difficult for him to get to the water. When the father heard how the *anangu* were treating his son he was furious and went back and took him away. The son grew up hurt, angry and wanting revenge. When he was a man he went back to the rockhole and ate all the *anangu* there – men, women and children – killing everybody except for one man who was hiding behind a rock. As he crawled away he was so full that he vomited blood, fat and hair. The man that survived speared the snake in the side, splitting him open and killing him. The tracks made by the two water-snake men and where the son was sick and speared and marked the land.
Doris PLATT
Lama Lama people
born 1950, Narwal (Coen), Queensland

Mitchan (Bush Rope)
2008, Lockhart River, Queensland
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2009  2009.87

2. Doris PLATT
Brought up in Coen and married a Lockhart man. We
used to go out mustering the bullocks at Mareena
Station near Coen at 4 am ... camping out with the stock
in the bush. It was really dry country out there ... you
gotta find puddle-hole when you run outta water. Now I
work at the Art Centre ... I love painting houses. I like
being active ... going out to see what's happening out
there. I like painting with bright colours and I feel good
when I paint those colours. Better than hanging round at
home.
(Artist Statement 2008)

For decades these women are part of a group of women
who have formed the backbone of their community.
Having made woven Puunyas (grass dilly-bags) and
Ulku (water and baby carriers) since childhood, the
artists recently began painting with acrylics on canvas.
The artists have quickly become skilled in this new,
expressive medium, producing distinctive works. Each artist has their own style that speaks of their
connections to the land. The strong lines in Elizabeth ‘Queenie’ GIBLET’s work Pa’anamu
(Headbands) for Laura Festival creates a abstract dance across the canvas as though the
headbands are hanging in readiness for the dancers to places them on their heads for dance. Doris
PLATT’s, work Mitchan (Bush Rope) ribbons across the canvas and evokes shimmering movement
as the bush rope is either being prepared or waiting to be used. The careful placements of lines
create movement and the appearance of an undulating surface that is mesmerising. These works will
be a fantastic addition to the Gallery’s collection of works from Lockhart River and for use in the new
Indigenous Galleries.
Elizabeth ‘Queenie’ GIBLET
Umpila people
born 1939, ‘Old Site’, Lockhart River, Queensland

Pa’anamu (Headbands) for Laura Festival
2008, Lockhart River, Queensland
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2009 2009.86

Elizabeth ‘Queenie’ GIBLET
Got that name ‘Queen’ from when we came to Lockhart ... when we moved from ‘Old Site’ ... it after that ‘Queen Elizabeth’. Old Mission they call me Elizabeth. Born at ‘Old Site’...
Shell necklaces ... for them we pick ‘em up Wimpa ... means sand beach ... collect ‘em low tide ... bring ‘em home boil ... take Minya (meat) out ... put that hole in that shell make necklace. Giddy Giddy beads ... collect from bush ... boil them salt water ... giddy float when soft ... ready. Those Punya (grass dillybag) ... in the old days we used to carry yam ... pipe ... gear to make spear with ... really strong. Ulku ... from that palm tree ... we used to carry baby inside ‘before time’ ... olden days ... before ... rope to carry Ulku ...
carry over the shoulder. When baby cry ... scratch that side of the Ulku to stop them cry. My mother she used this to carry us when we baby ... different today.
(Artist Statement 2008)

Story:
Queenie was the community headband and dancewear maker for the performers at the Laura Festival and has represented her headband designs on this canvas.

Having woven traditional fibre works for a large portion of their lives, these women have only recently started painting in acrylics on canvas. In less than two years, their paintings have progressed from small and timid beginnings to large and bold statements about their place in the world.
(Acknowledgements Andrew Baker Gallery 2009)

Lockhart River is a remote Aboriginal community on the east coast of Cape York. It is about 850km north of Cairns by road. The community is made up of about 800 people and is located 2km from Quintal Beach in Lloyd Bay and is bounded by rainforest, low mountain ranges and the sea. The people retain many aspects of their traditional culture and maintain a rich and diverse arts and culture.
Mirdidingkingathi JUWARNDA (Sally GABORI)
Kayardild/Kiaadiit peoples, Juwarna (Dolphin) totem
born c.1924, Bentinck Island, South Wellesley Island Group,
Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland

Outside Dibirdibi
2008, Lockhart River, Queensland
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2009 2009.586

Mirdidingkingathi JUWARNDA (Sally GABORI) was born c.1924 on the south side of Bentinck Island, of the South Wellesley Island Group in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland. After a lifetime of weaving and producing fibre craft, GABORI, took up painting in 2005 to considerable acclaim. Having been removed to Mornington Island with her family in the 1940s, GABORI is now a member of a vibrant new art movement operating out of the long-established Mornington Island Arts and Craft. It was GABORI’s keenness to paint that led other Bentinck Islander women living on Mornington to take up the brush. This is of great significance: Kiaadilt people had no prior history of art-making, as did the Lardil people of Mornington Island.

Her immediate love of paint and the full spectrum of colour offered to her triggered an outpouring of ideas including depicting her country and her ancestral stories. Her Kayardild language name Mirdidingkingathi means ‘born at Mirdidingki’, her country on Bentinck Island, and Juwarna means ‘dolphin’, her totem. (Acknowledgments Alcaston gallery 2009)

GABORI is widely known for her bold and strong use of colour. Reds, blues, pinks (her favourites), white and black are brilliantly splashed across the canvas. GABORI’s paintings have been acclaimed for their articulation of country, although her technical skill is considered equally important. Her paintings have a colourful presence; with fluid brush strokes overlaying solid masses of colour that represent the land, sea and sky. Her brush strokes and colour combinations bring movement and texture to the flat plane of the canvas, representing and replicating the life that surrounds the artist. (Acknowledgements Carly Lane, 2009)

Story:
This painting is about an outside hunting ground of the Southern end of Bentinck Island. Dingkarri is a shallow reef where there is deep water all around. It is a good place to hunt dugong and turtle. Outside Dingkarri is the boundary of our country to the south of Bentinck Island. (Artist statement 2008)
Tommy WATSON
Pitjantjatjara people
born c.1935, Anamarapiti, near Irrunytju
[Wingellina], Western Australia

Irika
2004, Irrunytju, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2004        2004.501

Tommy Watson, a Pitjantjatjara wati [man] was
born c. 1935 at Anamarapiti, a homeland 44
kms west of Irrunytju [Wingellina]. Irrunytju
community is located on the edge of the Great
Victoria Desert, twelve kms south west of
Surveyors General Corner, the intersection of
the three state borders of WA, SA and the NT.
The Western Desert region is an ancient and
aesthetic landscape of salt lakes, claypans,
undulating stony plains, rocky breakaways,
sand dunes and gentle hills.

This diverse environment is home to both Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara language speakers who
now reside at the community settlement of Irrunytju [Wingellina], which was established in the 1960s
and incorporated in 1976. Today there are approximately 180 people living at Irrunytju. Before
Irrunytju was established terrible years of drought forced the Anangu (people) to mission settlements
such as Ernabella in South Australia and Warburton in Western Australia.

The artist travelled in the bush and desert with his parents, taught by his father to hunt and respect
his traditional country. With this knowledge Watson travelled through his country alone. I want to
paint these stories so that others can learn and understand about our culture and country.
(Acknowledgments to Aboriginal and Pacific Arts and Irrunytju Arts)

The artist’s story for Irika:

This is my Grandpa’s and mother’s place. I grew up in this place. There are rockholes here. There is
also a fig tree there called Illi.

A masterful painting, the canvas is a kaleidoscopic surface of layered purple, blue, red, white and
yellow dots depicting sites in the artist’s country. The artist is renowned for his application of colour,
which give his canvases a jewel-like intensity.
Weaver JACK
Yulparija people
born c. 1928, Lungurang, Kimberley, Western Australia

Nannarri
2005, Bidyadanga, Kimberley, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2006 2006.678

Weaver Jack was born at Lungurang, a jila (place of living water) in the Great Sandy Desert, where there is a big snake [ancestral being] living in the jila. Weaver travelled around her country with her two mothers and father, then was married to her promised husband, had children and continued travelling further from her home. She is considered to be the senior law woman for the Yulparija people in Bidyadanga, where she now lives. In mid 2003, when art materials were brought to Bidyadanga, Weaver Jack was among those who experimented with synthetic polymer paint on paper and canvas.

He got all the big trees there, I walk around all this country. I walk with my aunty we came all together to the bush, this is the country we left. Plenty kuwl (meat), mayi (bush tucker). Walk around with my grandmother’s, grandfather’s, my aunty tell me they been walking round and round talking to that country and he [is] all right now.
(Artist statement for painting, 2006)

Like her contemporaries practising traditional customary lifestyles, Weaver Jack’s paintings on paper and canvas refers to the same subject matter: sites of cultural importance to the artist, for which she has ceremonial obligations and custodianship.

Bidyadanga is a coastal town situated 250km south of Broome and is traditional land of the Karrajari. For many years it was known as La Grange station. In the 1970s the station was taken over by the Catholic Church who ran it as a mission for various community groups. The introduction of the equal pay decision in the 1970s resulted in many Aboriginal people being forced from their traditional country by station owners and into such missions and towns. This is when many of the Yulparija people came to Bidyadanga from their country which runs from Telfer in the south to Kintore in the east and close to Fitzroy Crossing in the north. Most of the Bidyadanga artists are the Yulparija elders who have spent most of their lives in the desert living in the traditional bush way. Much of their work reflects this and depicts the country on the Canning stock route around Well 33, which was where Rover Thomas/Joolama was born. When the Karrajari were returned their land in 2003, many of the elders started thinking about their traditional country, and the fact that many of their grandchildren will never know it. This led to their desire to start painting. They have shown an extraordinary talent combining their intimate knowledge of the desert landscape with the rich colours of the salt water country which has resulted in a distinct style of painting. With a population of around 800, Bidyadanga is the largest single Aboriginal community in Western Australia.
PANTJITI Mary MCLEAN
Ngaatjatjarra people, Tjarruru subsection,
born 1935, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia

Palunya: that's all
2002 - 2004, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on boards

Purchased 2006 2006.27.A-M

Mclean, an Ngaatjatjarra woman, was born in the 1930s in the desert area to the west and south west of Uluru, and had very little contact with European people in her early years. Her country, her grandmother's country, is the area now known as Docker River on the Western Australian - Northern Territory border in the Western Desert.

Due to a prolonged drought in the late 1940s/early '50s Mary, along with her husband, her son and many other of her people were forced to walk the huge distance out of the Western Desert via the Warburton Ranges, and on to the settlement of Cosmo Newbury in the Eastern Goldfields, Western Australia. From here they travelled to Laverton in the Eastern Goldfields. Government policy at the time dictated that any local Aboriginal children were to be raised and schooled there by missionaries at Mt Margaret Mission. Mary's son was taken into Mount Margaret Mission (230 km north-east of Kalgoorlie). While the children were at the mission the parents were directed to find work at the sheep stations. Mary chose to be a musterer instead of the usual domestic work for women. 'Mary was a 'number one' horse rider and a highly esteemed musterer' (long-time collaborator and artist, Nalda Searles, 2004). After many years Mary left the station life and worked in the sandalwood camps, from there she moved to Kalgoorlie where she resides today at Ninga Mia settlement.

Mary McLean's paintings are everyday narratives evoking the life of her early childhood with energy and abundance: men hunting, women and kids collecting bush tucker or running free and family life around the camp. The secular and the sacred are totally enmeshed in her images.


Story:

Palunya: that’s all, a major, multi-panelled painting is rendered in almost ‘comic-book’ style, as a series of storyboards, detailing events and experiences from throughout McLean’s long and highly productive life.

Ten years I been painting…ten years, isn’t it? All the time painting, painting, same painting, long one
finished...leave 'em, get another one. I'm happy painting, my painting...and they buy it, you know...It's hard work, you know...I been live for painting myself.

In her initial proposal to the Australia Council for the Visual Arts Fellowship McLean stated she want to do small paintings, showing the sizes with her hands, describing her vision as thus:

Birds! Kids running chasing birds, and a dog running around too, on one small canvas. All the kids in the bush around a big fire, old ladies grinding bush tucker, old man comes to the fire, she's cooking rabbit for tea. Dogs chasing an emu, and the old man runs up and grabs it, then cooks it in the ground. I'll do a rockhole with one tree and it will go in the middle, all the others will go around it. I'll paint one about my mother and the baby being born; the rockhole where my mother's cord was cut. When I was a little girl I used to run around digging bardies. No feed, it was a hard life; mothers dig rabbits, collect quandongs, grind wild seeds for damper. Mens all go out hunting kangaroo. Night time there is a big rain; all the men are shouting and happy. Men are all naked; they keep the fires burning all night, shouting and singing. Next day they go chasing kangaroos. Kangaroos get tired, then they catch them. No knife, they cut it up with a white stone, with a quartz stone. I showed you the place before, near Docker River. There were no tomahawks; we made dishes with that axe, I learned from her at Tjunti. We made wind shelters; in the storm we put up our hands over our heads, we were frightened...painting a little wind shelter with the kids lying down. I've done that before; people can see how Wongis make places to camp.

I will do all the rockholes, when I start paintings they will come back to me. There at Docker River, where all the old people tried to jump on the Toyota, that's where I'll start them.

With little boards there will be stories from my mother's country, my father's country at Papulankuta (Blackstone), those places where I was running around.

Now having completed the series, the paintings consist of all those stories put together to make a mosaic of family life in the Western Desert before whitefellas made their appearance there. There are the stories within the painting, and there is the story of the painting.

Ivan SHEPARD  
Ngaanyatjarra people, Panaka skin  
born 1944, Lapuka, Gibson Desert, Western Australia  

Tjukurrpa Wati Kutjarra  
2008, Warakurna, Western Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
Purchased 2008  2008.680  

Ivan Shepherd was born near Lapaku between the Rawlinson Ranges and Lake Christopher in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia. He is a senior man and lives in Warakurna with his family. He painted a limited amount of works with the Warburton Arts Project in the early 1990s and began painting with Warakurna Artists in mid 2005. SHEPHERD is a senior custodian of country and paints Tingari Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) from his country Lapuka.  

This painting is about the Wati Kutjarra (two men). The Wati Kutjarra were travelling around. They were looking at Warakurna from on top of the hill but didn't camp there. They then travelled all the way to Lake Christopher, a very big salt lake. We took the Native Title people to Lake Christopher. The two men they decided to stop at Lake Christopher. They left a firestick in the middle of the salt lake near a soak. There is an ochre tree not far from the soak. A long time ago my uncle who had a sore foot stopped at Lake Christopher. He drank the soak water but it was very salty. He must have finished there, that's a sorry story. My father was camping on the other side of Lake Christopher. 
(Acknowledgements Warakurna Artists http://www.warakurnaartists.com.au/)  

Warakurna is a remote community situated in the Ngaanyatjarra lands on the Great Central Road, Western Australia, near the Northern Territory border, approximately 330 kilometres west of Uluru. The township of approximately 180 people is located next to the Giles meteorological weather station, and is nestled amongst the spectacular Rawlinson Ranges. Warakurna has a long history of artistic expression. Early in 2004 the community was assisted by Ngaanyatjarra Regional Arts to develop its own art centre. After many months of planning and hard work, Warakurna Artists Aboriginal Corporation was established.  
In March 2005, the art centre was opened amid much enthusiasm and excitement. It is the newest such development in the Ngaanyatjarra region and is fully owned and governed by Aboriginal people. It also services and represents artists from the nearby communities of Tjukurla and Wanarn. Warakurna Artists is an energetic, creative and happy place, where men and women, young and old, paint and share Tjukurrpa (ancestral stories) and contemporary tales. (© Warakurna Artists & Alcaston Gallery 2008)
This painting is a fine example of the artist’s work. Although Shepherd was a sporadic painter, with the establishment of the Warakurna Art Centre he has become an active artist. Shepherd paints mainly about the Tingari Tjukurrpa. This particular painting holds similarities to that of some of the Papunya Tula Artists such as Patrick Tjungurrayi and those with responsibilities for the Tingari cycles. The delicate use of soft colours attribute to a masterfully painted design. An interesting comparison with other Tingari depictions is his use of geometric design in portraying the Tingari Dreaming cycle as it is usually depicted with circular forms. Further information about this ceremony is generally restricted to the public or the uninitiated viewer.
Alan GRIFFITHS
Ngarinyman/Ngaliwurru peoples, Jungala subsection
born 1933, Victoria Downs Station, Northern Territory

Mindarra and Waringarr
2006, Kununurra, Western Australia
natural earth pigments on canvas

Purchased 2006  2006.1087

Alan Griffiths is a senior artist from the remote community of Kununurra in Western Australia. He is a widely respected leader and Elder of his Ngarinyman/Ngaliwurru people and also of his wife’s Mirrawoong group from the Mirima community, Kununurra. He was born at Victoria River Station, Northern Territory, in 1933 and his country is the surrounding region known as Victoria River Downs. He remained there until 1957 before moving to the Katherine area where he was head stockman on Beswick Station and then also onto Else Station near Mataranka. After extensive station work in the Northern Territory he moved to Kununurra in 1965.

Griffiths began painting after his retirement from farm work in 1981 and continues to live in Kununurra where he devotes his time to his art, and teaching and practising his culture. He often works closely with his wife, Peggy Griffiths, who is also a practising artist.

Dance rituals are a central theme in Alan Griffiths’ work. He is the acknowledged specialist maker of the distinctive Balmoorra thread-cross dance frames and is a key choreographer of the interlinking narratives that he dreams and then translates into the song cycles which accompany his performances. Balga is a song and dance style specific to the east Kimberley region, in which the dancers carry Balmoorra and additional props which illustrate a narrative. The design of the Balmoorra and other elements are determined by the spirit beings who originally transmit the song cycles to an individual through dreams.

Story:
Mindarra and Waringarmi are the names of areas of traditional country around the two billabongs in the lower section of the painting. Mindarra is wild waterlily country in the lower left and Wangarri is in the lower right. During holiday times Ngarinyman and Ngaliwurru peoples would come together for sharing dances trade, hunting and storytelling at these places. The dance performance, or Joonba, indicated in the lower section is performed by men wearing tall paper bark hats, their bodies daubed with ochre and feathers and their legs tied with gum-leaves. In the upper left is Bali Bali Balga. Dancers carry large thread cross Balmoorra on their shoulders with stamping feet and swaying movements to the accompaniment of song and boomerang clap-sticks. The Balmoorra consisting of brightly coloured wools and varying in size and complexity, image the key elements of the dance story. In the lower section of the artwork surrounding the holiday camps dancers perform Wangga. Wangga dances are the most common celebratory performance danced with fast movements to the often complicated rhythms of clapsticks and didgeridoo. Song and dance is an intrinsic aspect of Kimberley cultural life not just as part of ceremony but as entertainment for family and community.
Judy MENGIL
Mirriwoong people
born 1949, Newry Station, Kimberley, Western Australia

Larrngiya
2004, Kununurra, Western Australia
natural earth pigments on canvas
Purchased 2005  2005.161

Judy Mengil was born on Newry Station and grew up learning about station life. After living on Newry for some time, her mother and father moved to Carlton Hill Station where her mother worked in the kitchen. Judy watched all the older women working as cooks and making bread. She also lived at Ivanhoe Station and Argyle Station. In 1965 her mother died and the Welfare Department shifted Judy and her sister to Beagle Bay Mission, WA. She returned from the mission in 1971 and settled in Kununurra with her four children.
Judy Started painting in the mid 1990’s although only recently has dedicated herself to her art.
(Acknowledgements Waringarri Arts)

Story:
A reoccurring theme in her art is the country around Binjin – Bucket Springs, or Keep River National Park, Northern territory, which is her mother’s country and Milligan, which is near Bullo River in the Northern Territory, which is her father’s country. The Victoria River flows down the left of the painting towards the open sea. This place is Larrngiya. The grey area on the left shows the sea. The large hill is Bullaninga. The sun is rising over this hill. The long rocky ridge below is Goonoolulu. The waterhole in the centre is Barrup.
(Acknowledgements Waringarri Arts)

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts was established in 1985 and officially opened as an art and craft outlet in August 1988. Since it has served to foster and promote the work of Aboriginal artists from several language groups in the north east Kimberley including Mirrawoong, Gajarriwoong, Ngariman, Jaminjung, Ngaliwuru, Murring-patha, Wunambul, Kija and Kjaru primarily through their links to Mirrawoong country and families by marriage, trade routes and geographical proximity.

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts is situated at Kununurra in the heart of the east Kimberley region of northern Australia. Waringarri Aboriginal Arts is the first wholly Aboriginal owned art centre established in the east Kimberley region. Many famous artists have emerged through Waringarri including Queenie McKenzie, Rover Thomas and Paddy Carlton presenting an aesthetic that is significantly an east Kimberley style.
(Acknowledgements Waringarri Arts)
Peggy GRIFFITHS
Mirriwoong people, Namij subsection
born c.1941, Kimberley region,
Western Australia

Goodim
2004, Kununurra, Western Australia
natural pigments on canvas
Purchased 2005  2005.160

Peggy GRIFFITHS
Peggy was born in 1941 at Newry Station in the Northern Territory to Dianah Dingle and Frank Moore. Her father Frank Moore took off during the early years and the station manager's wife told Dianah to send Peggy off to school to do her schooling at K.R.S (Kimberley Research Station). When Peggy was 15 her mother took her away from school to Argyle Station. Peggy then found out she had been promised in marriage to Alan Griffiths when she turned 16. Peggy and her future husband were told to leave; and moved to Kununurra. Today they have 5 children and lots of grandchildren.

Peggy remembers much about family and bush life around Goodim community and Newry Station which is her family's country. It was here that she saw old people taken away from the camp with chains around their necks and here that she learned to dance all the traditional dances.

Peggy began working with Waringarri Aboriginal Arts in 1985 carving and painting boab nuts and boomerangs. Peggy then progressed to canvases and limited edition prints. Peggy and Alan often paint together and are key performers and teachers of corroboree and traditional dances for their community. Peggy is now a senior artist at Waringarri Arts teaching other artists. (Acknowledgements Waringarri Arts)

Story:
This is an area of the artist's traditional country at Goodim near Keep River National Park close to Kununurra in Western Australia. This area belongs to the artist's father and grandfather. This is spinifex country. "I am painting the spinifex in the wind." The grey line curving through the painting represents Moonoomoorrem - the Keep River as it runs through gorge indicated by the two hill ridges at the centre of the painting.
(Acknowledgements Waringarri Arts)
Anmanari BROWN
Pitjantjatjara/Minyma peoples
born c. 1930s, Purnpurna, Northern Territory

Minyma Tjuta Tjukurrpa [Seven Sisters Dreaming]
2005, Irrunytju [Wingellina], Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2005 2005.1040

Anmanari BROWN was born in the early 1930s at Purnpurna, near Irrunytju (formerly Wingellina), in a remote part of Western Desert country near the conjunction of the Western Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory borders. She travelled around with her family in the bush of the Western Desert before whitefellas came to the lands. She settled at Warburton mission in Western Australia where she attended school. She now lives in Irrunytju with her daughters.

Story:
This country has a big rockhole with a water snake. As a child, before whitefellas came, she lived with her family in the desert walking through the bush. Minmya Tjuta (Seven Sisters) is a major tjukurpa at Irrunytju and across the desert. The seven sisters were being chased by Kulakula (Larrikin Man) called Nyiru. He wanted to take one for a wife. He tried to trick them. There are two kuniya (water snakes) nearby. The sisters did not want him, they were a bit frightened, so they hid and ran away. He tracked them and chased them right across the desert. He is still chasing them. They can still be seen today, in the sky, (the Pleiades) travelling.
(Acknowledgements to Aboriginal and Pacific Arts, 2005)
Maringka BAKER
Pitjantjatjara people
born c.1952, Kanpi, South Australia

Kuru Ala
2008, Tjungu Palya, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2009  2009.137

Maringka BAKER was born c.1952 at an important ceremonial site Kaliumpil, a rockhole, a traditional camping area in Western Australia. BAKER’s parents died when she was young and she was raised by Anmanari Brown and other members of her extended family. She went to the mission school of Warburton in WA and Ernabella in SA. BAKER married Douglas Baker (Jimmy BAKER’s nephew) and had one child. BAKER is a senior Pitjantjatjara artist living in the remote community settlement of Kanpi, 100kms east of the tri state borders of WA, SA and the NT.

BAKER began painting for Ninuku Artists in 2004 and in 2005 for Tjungu Palya. Loosely translated, Tjungu Palya means “being together is good”. When BAKER began to paint with acrylics, Amanda recalls her insistence on a palette that was “different to the others”.

Story:
Kuru Ala is a sacred place for the Seven Sisters story. Kangkuru munu Malanypa nyinanyo (the older sister is sitting with her younger sister). All the sisters were travelling through this country. One cheeky man, wati Nyiru was chasing the sisters all over. He was an Ngankuri (magician) and could change into many things to trick the sisters. He changed into a quandong tree, but when the sisters tasted it they knew it wasn’t quite right. This site is in Western Australia.
Jimmy BAKER
Pitjantjatjara people
born c.1915, Malumpa, South Australia

Kalaya Tjukurpa
2008, Tjungu Palya, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2009 2009.138

Jimmy BAKER was born along the Kalaya Tjukurpa (Emu Dreaming) track in the Western Desert at a rockhole called Malumpa (close to the present day community of Kanpi in South Australia) c. 1915. He remembers as a young boy ‘whitefellas’ coming in on camels and asking to be led to waterholes. After the mission days BAKER along with key family members instigated the establishment of a homeland community at Kanpi, so they could live back in their own country.

From an early age, BAKER was aware that he had been given special powers. As a highly respected Ngangkari man (healer), he has travelled extensively throughout South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, applying his traditional knowledge and skills. BAKER began painting in 2004 and has since produced a relatively small body of work. He is one of a handful of artists attached to the Tjungu Palya community based art centre at Nyapari, in the north-west corner of South Australia.

When he paints, it is intuitive that the resultant image is representative of a story which is both complex and powerful. He is custodian of many stories befitting his seniority, including ‘Kipara’ (Bush Turkey), ‘Kalaya’ (Emu), ‘Piltati’ (sacred rockhole), ‘Katajita’ (Kanpi), Wanampi Kutjara (two serpent men’s creation story). His intimate cultural knowledge is inextricably linked to his Ngangkari status.

(Acknowledgements to Graham Marshall, 2007)

Story:
Kalaya munu kiparaku Tjukurpa (this is the story about the emu and the bush turkey). The emu father had many chicks with him, but that poor old bush turkey only had one child. When the bush turkey came by he saw that the emu was sitting all alone and he asked ‘where are all the children?’ ‘I didn’t want all them children, they are too much trouble. They eat too much, so I killed them all!’. The emu hadn’t really killed his children, but hidden them in the bush. When the bush turkey’s son heard this he said “If you don’t kill me I’ll show you where all the tucker is”. But the turkey was thinking I might kill my son. He killed him, hit him on the head. While the turkey was sitting down at Kanpi he saw the emu come back with all his children. He realised he had been tricked and was very angry. He decided to kill the emu father. He told the emu to grab his spear thrower and come with him. He hit him in the chest and finished him. When he got back to Kanpi rockhole all the emu kids were painted up for Inma (sacred dancing). The kipara hid behind a tree and whistled at them. He was frightening them and they thought he was mamu (devil spirit). They ran off down towards Watarru. This is the true story for Kanpi.

Today BAKER is a senior law man and a highly regarded Ngangkari (traditional healer).
Harry TJUTJUNA
Pitjantjatjara people
born c.1930, near Mt Davies, North West corner of South Australia

Wangka Tjukurpa (Spiderman)
2007, Amata Community, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2008
2008.815

Harry TJUTJUNA started painting only in the last few months of 2005. He is in his late ‘seventies, although it is difficult to verify the year of his birth as is the case with many people born in remote communities. He is a senior law man and Ngangkari, a traditional healer.

Harry’s country is near Mt Davies in the north-west corner of South Australia close to the Western Australia and Northern Territory borders and that is where he was born in the bush. He came in to Ernabella as a young person and was educated at the Ernabella mission school. As a young adult he took an active part in the life of the newly settled community, working on bore-sinking, fencing, gardening, and with the sheep which the mission ran to pay its way, and provide the medical services and education which were the purpose of the mission’s foundation in 1937. Later Harry moved back to the far north-west with his family, living mostly in and around Wingellina in Western Australia, and Pipalyatjara on the Anangu Pitjantatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.

Harry concentrates on a few important subjects in his paintings: kangaroo men and (marsupial) mouse women – two of the significant Ancestral Creation beings of his country; and men thinking about (chasing) women i.e. finding their life partners; and women thinking about (and running away from!) men i.e. considering their suitors; and young girls playing milpatjunanyi, the traditional way of telling stories in the sand. He is one of the greatest characters at the art centre with a wonderful sense of humour and big laugh!
(Acknowledgements Ernabella Arts, 2007)

Harry has spoken about spider webs, as a direct visual reference to the web-like forms. He then described himself as a spider man, spiders being involved in the Tjukurpa, or creations stories of his birthplace. People often associate themselves with one or more of the creatures of their ngura (home place) in this way. He also spoke about himself and his role as an ngangkari (traditional healer) and this may relate to the ngangkaris use of spider webs in treatment of cuts and skin injuries.
(Artist Statement, 2007)
Ningura NAPURRULA  
Pintupi people  
born c. 1938, Watulka, Northern Territory

**Untitled**  
2006, Kintore, Northern Territory  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
Purchased 2009  
2009.134

Ningura Napurrula was born in the desert at Watulka, south of Kiwirrkura c. 1938. Along with her husband, the late Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi, she moved to the Papunya Community where the Papunya Tula Artists began. In the early eighties she moved with her family of four children back to Kintore where she now lives and paints.

In 2004 she was one of eight Indigenous artists chosen to have their work incorporated into the architecture of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris. The museum opened in 2006 and the whole ceiling of an entire floor in the administration building is covered with her painting. It is amazing to see.

At that time Papunya Tula Artists donated a major NAPURRULA canvas which was auctioned in Sotheby’s Paris rooms with all of the funds being donated to the dialysis unit at Kintore. It is not the first time her paintings have been used to help her community with a major canvas supporting the construction of a school pool in 2005.

At the heart of her work is the land she holds so dear. The rockhole sites of Wirrulnga and Ngaminya, east of the Kiwirrkura Community in Western Australia. The site of Wirrulnga is associated with birth. It is the combination of land forms, history and ancestors that supply the impetus and substance of NAPURRULA’s art.

At these sites spun hair-string is made to form nyimparra (hair-string skirts) which are worn during ceremony. There is a strong narrative element to Ningura’s painting. Her use of a limited palette emphasises the structural elements of her work and she uses slight tonal variations of cream and white to move the viewer’s eye around the surface of the paintings.

NAPURRULA’s use of typically black or red to create a background layer with floating objects in contrasting colour on the surface begins a dialogue between shapes and the ground. A layer of dots, in shades or white, define the field. The background colour peeping thorough this skin animates the surface. The bold objects on the surface become seminal forms illuminated by the pale ground. The white dots form trailing lines and patterns of their own and the resultant shapes form an organic symmetry while in others the bold field of diverse shapes is so full and energised it seems to be pulsing with life. Sometimes linear pattern and linear dots surrounding it confuse ground and surface and add another dimension to the picture plane.
Tiger PALPATJA
Pitjantjatjara people
born c. 1920, Piltati, South Australia

Untitled
2007, Tjala Arts, Amata Community, South Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2008  2008.816

Tiger PALPATJA was born out bush, and grew up in Ernabella (Pukatja) when it was a Presbyterian Mission. There he went to primary school and learnt to speak a little English. As a young man, his main job was shearing the sheep, and in all probability, shepherding work as well. His colleagues laugh and say that he was a ‘top gun shearer’ in his time! Tiger also did fencing and stockyard work. (The Missionaries reported that although the shearing by the men was well done, lack of continuous practice meant no expertise was achieved. At one point the Mission had 5,000 sheep.) Tiger started painting at Tjala Arts (formerly Minymaku Arts) in September 2004. Before coming to Tjala Arts, Tiger had never painted. He was better known for his punu (carved wood objects), especially his spears. Tiger is also a Ngangkari or traditional healer and one of the few remaining elders that have strong ties to traditional culture. This is demonstrated in the images he paints – the Creation (Dreaming) Story associated with his country, Piltati, and how it was formed by the Wanampi (Rainbow or Water Snake) Ancestors. It took almost two years of coaxing by Sara Twigg-Patterson, the Manager, to convince Tiger to start painting. Sara then had to show Tiger how to use a brush and apply paint onto the canvas. Sara said it was ‘one of those very rare, but very special moments’. Once started, he has not stopped! In early 2006 Tiger’s surname, Panpatja, was found to be incorrectly spelt. The correct spelling is Palpatja.

(Acknowledgements Ernabella Arts, 2007)

This story is about the Ancestral being Wanampi (Rainbow or water snakes). It tells the creation story related to the country around Piltati and is about two women/wives who are sisters, and two men/husbands who are brothers. This story has particular significance to Tiger as Piltati is his family’s country and the Wanampi are his Ancestors. Back in ancestral times when the world was young, two snake brothers and their wives lived near Piltati, west of Amata. Every day the women went out hunting, and every evening they bought home kuka (meat for cooking) for the men, who did not do anything but perform ceremonies. After a while the women became annoyed at the men’s laziness. They decided to eat all the food they caught and to leave the men to fend for themselves. The Snake brothers were angry and decided to punish the women for their insubordination. After lots of talking, each of the brothers agreed to change themselves into Wanampi (a giant ancestral water serpent, which also had the power to travel above and below ground) and play a practical joke upon the women that would cause them a great deal of hard useless labour.

They went to the marsupial rat hole where the women had been digging, and imitated the tracks of a large snake by rubbing the back of a spear thrower on the ground. They then entered the hole, and one of them left out enough of his tail for the women to see. The younger sister became very excited when she saw the tracks of so large a snake then its tail, and began to pull the creature from its burrow, but the tail kept slipping from her grasp. Always the Wanampi, to tease the younger sister, allowed himself to be dragged out a few feet before wriggling himself free. Again and again he let himself be caught before wriggling free once more. Eventually the younger sister became so tired she gave up and returned to her sister. In the evening, when they were eating dinner, the younger sister told her elder sister, ‘Today I almost caught a carpet snake as big as a Wanampi, but I couldn’t pull it from its burrow, it was too strong for me.’ ‘I'll give you a hand tomorrow’, said the elder sister, ‘and we'll catch it no matter how big it is!'
The next morning the women set off with their wana (digging sticks) and piti (wooden container). They dug all day long, then the next, occasionally glimpsing the snake. Sometimes they caught a small carpet snake for their evening meal. The small carpet snakes were created by the men so the women would not lose heart nor grow hungry. They continued to dig on, after the Wanampi, but they never caught him. In their pursuit the women dug a trench from Atjaratjara to Piltati, now a watercourse, approximately 25 km long. Their burrow started to go deeper, and the women dug many subsidiary branches in their pursuit, creating the gorge at Piltati, with its creeks and piles of rock that clutter the valley floor.

Finally the elder sister changed her tactics. She dug a pit ahead of the entrance to the burrow (now the larges rock hole at Piltati), uncovering the Wanampi before he could get away. She was so frightened by his huge coils turning around at her feet that she threw her digging stick, piercing the side of the Wanampi. The other Wanampi left the burrow and chased and swallowed the younger woman. The injured snake, although in great pain, caught, killed and ate the elder sister at the mouth of the Piltati gorge. That Wanampi is now a bloodwood tree with a dry limb sticking out one side. The dry limb is the digging stick with which the snake is speared. The trunk is covered with lumps and excrescences. These are the body of the women still showing through the skin of the snake.

(Artist statement, 2007)
Timothy COOK
Tiwi people
born 1958, Melville Island, Northern Territory

Kulama
2009, Nguiu, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on canvas

Purchased 2009 2009.584

Timothy COOK belongs to the House Fly skin group of the Tiwi people. He was born and grew up in country close to Milikapiti on Melville Island. Bathurst and Melville Islands, more commonly known as the Tiwi Islands after the Tiwi people, are located approximately 60km north-west of Darwin. The Aspley Strait separates Melville and Bathurst Island from mainland Australia and Melville Island is Australia's largest island after Tasmania.

Timothy COOK has been painting for the shortest amount of time and is one of the youngest Tiwi artists, commencing his artistic career in the late 1990s.

His work depicts the body designs used in the Pukumani ceremony, the traditional Tiwi mortuary ceremony, one of the foundations of the Tiwi people’s traditional beliefs. His work is also closely related to the Kulama ceremony, the other of their main ceremony of the Tiwi people.

Kulama Ceremony
The Kulama ceremony occurs towards the end of the wet season and is an annual celebration of life. The ceremony involves three days and three nights of ritual body painting, singing, dancing and eating yams. Concentric circles often appear as the main element of contemporary Tiwi patterns, representing the Kulama circle or ceremonial dancing ground. Artist, Maria Josette Orsto, describes Kulama as “very important to Tiwi. When the rain finishes, the Tiwi start Kulama. Kulama ceremony is good for health, good hunting, initiation and good marriage.
Dhuwarrwarr MARIKA
Rirratjingu/Miliwurrwurr peoples, Dhuwa moiety
born c.1946, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Milngurr
2006, Yirrkala, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark and hollow logs

Purchased 2008 2008.679,

Dhuwarrwarr is the sister of Wandjuk, Banygul and Banduk Marika, and daughter of Mawalan, the Rirratjingu clan leader who originally welcomed the missionaries to set up on his land, creating the beginnings of modern day Yirrkala.

"From that time when my father was painting my elder sister helped him but she is a little blind now. From when I was twelve to this time I started to paint. Sometimes I used to help my father. That one (her nephew Mawalan #2) he learned from grandfather and his father. He watched his grandfather - that my father. Currently I'm doing my own art using the same design and lino printing - my fathers design but my own imagination. When my father was alive they only painted on bark. I use my own colours from the shore - the yellow and the red, just a rock, and the black, bayau (not) charcoal. Like my brother (Wandjuk), I sometimes mix yellow and black to make green. Like this one (holds a loaf of white clay) I used to go and get it in a bucket and mash it up and leave it in the sun to dry. I am trying hard to get this man (Mawalan#2) to come back to do the painting. (Artist statement)

Story:
The time referred to as the time before the first morning has the Djan’kawu (a man and his two sisters) leaving in a canoe to follow the morning star from their residence of Buralku, an island of ancestral dead. With them they carried dilly bags, mats and digging sticks that were to later manifest into sacred objects through ritual of song and dance that started on the sea of travel and into the sand dunes rimming the landing shores of Yalangbara. From Yalangbara the Djan’kawu set out on their epic journey of eastern Arnhem Land, travelling on what they sanctified as Dhuwa land, singing the country and splitting it up into clan estates, designating sacred law (Mardayin) song, dance, totem, language to each as they went. Thus the one side of the duality that governs the Yolngu of Arnhem Land - the two moiety systems of the Dhuwa and the Yirritja, emanated from Yalangbara.

Today on the sandy beach at Yalangbara freshwater is found. By digging at the right location the freshwater seeps through the sand pooling in the hole dug. Rirratjingu song cycles celebrate the Djan’kawu creating this well by plunging the sacred Mawalan (digging stick) into this area as they strode up the beach with their possessions to the sand dunes further up. This well with water of sacred and special qualities called Milngurr. These sisters gave birth to all Dhuwa clans starting here. Affected by salt on their sea journey and the incursion of freshwater at Yalangbara, the mixing of the two was the catalyst for procreation. Today the tides of the sea and flow of freshwater are sung to explain and ensure the cycles of conception, birth and death of the Rirratjingu from their clan lands (Yalangbara) to relate specifically to the powers of the Djan’kawu and the land they affected for the Dhuwa. (Acknowledgements Buku-Larrnggay Mulka)
Gulumbu YUNUPINGU
Gumatj/Rrakpala peoples
born c.1945, Biranybirany, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Garak, The Universe
2008 & 2009, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark

Courtesy of the artist and Alcaston Gallery, 2009

Born c. 1945 in northeast Arnhem Land, as a child Gulumbu Yunupingu lived at Yirrkala and went to school in the old Mission until she married. She is a member of a renowned family from Yirrkala, the Yunupingu family of the Gumatj, Rrakpala clan, her homeland is Biranybirany and her moiety is Yirritja moiety. Gulumbu’s father was the renowned cultural activist, artist and senior man Munggurruwuy (c. 1907–1978), who was married to Makurrnu, from a Galpu clan. The oldest sister of well-known activists Gularrwuy and Mandawuy Yunupingu, her recently deceased sister was also a highly regarded print-maker. Gulumbu is an artist of extraordinary skill who is as confident in weaving mats and stringing shells as she is in painting barks and hollow logs. She has also studied as a Health worker through Miwatj Health where she has applied her extensive knowledge of bush medicine. Her knowledge of bush plants and medicine, together with her health worker studies, has been incorporated into her extremely full life as a respected elder of her community, mother and grandmother.

Until recently, when her stunning set of three larrakitj (memorial poles) was awarded the overall prize in the 2004 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Yunupingu’s work had not really received the attention of major collecting institutions since it focused on fibre work, bush string, small carvings, small bark paintings and cultural objects. In the creation of these objects she has been innovative but she has also importantly revealed many old techniques to new generations.

In the early 2000s she expanded her visual repertoire to include an incredible proficiency, in printmaking, bark painting and larrakitj. As with many Indigenous arts practitioners, Gulumbu’s daily life provided little time to devote to artistic practice, but once she made the development her work has generated incredible acclaim as being highly innovative and visually stunning. Her Telstra Award was the unanimous choice of not only the judges, but also the initial pre-selection panel.

Gulumbu lives at Gunyungarra, an outstation near Yirrkala. Gulumbu’s source of inspiration is Garak, the Universe, which at first glance appears to be a literal representation of the Milky Way, an important customary and ancestral story, particularly for the Yolngu of northeast Arnhem Land. However, as Gulumbu has stated herself in conversation with the Senior Curator, her art is about the entire universe, all the stars that can be seen by the naked eye, and also everything that exists far beyond any scientific expedition or estimation. She shares much with another revelatory latecomer to visual expression of cultural stories, Emily Kam Kngwarray, whose emphatic statement that her work was alwey, ‘the whole lot’, ie, everything that can be imagined, and all that cannot.

Following her major award last year, at which her eloquent acceptance speech moved the audience to tears, her work has received considerable acclaim:

Gulumbu Yunupingu says she woke one morning two years ago remembering a story her father used to tell her when he sat painting in Arnhem Land.

It was about three sisters in a canoe, and three brothers who came after them, travelling west, she says. They are special stars, which we call wishing stars. They give us bush tucker, they multiply food in the sea. Yunupingu says she grabbed her brushes and started painting three poles. My memory just came out, she says. I got up early, around 6am, and it was finished in a week and a half.
The judges said Garak, The Universe evoked the mysteries and fantasies of infinity. These hollow poles literally glisten with innumerable constellations, which colourfully evoke the enormity and magic of an endless universe, something which we see with familiarity but could not possibly ever comprehend, the judges said. These beautiful objects eloquently express Gulumbu's sense of connection with local place, tradition and the stories as told to her.

Yunupingu, says there is no danger of the stories and traditions of her Yolngu people being lost. The kids are our future so I sit down and talk to them like my father did to me when I was a girl.

(Acknowledgments to Lindsay Murdoch, ‘Father's 'wishing stars' inspires a winning work', The Age August 14, 2004)
Boliny WANAMBI
Marrakulu/Dhurili peoples, Dhuwa moiety
born 1957, Gurka’wuy, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Yanawal
2006, Gurka’wuy, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on stringybark

Purchased 2007   2007.909

Boliny WANAMBI’s father was the late Marrakulu leader and artist Mithili, who is represented in the national collection. Boliny is a prolific artist also working with natural ochres on bark, lino-cut images and wood carvings. Her first major exhibition was a two-person show in Darwin in 2006. Women artists in Arnhem Land have increasingly come to prominence in the past decade, although they generally assisted male family members. This luminous bark painting shimmers with the artist’s application of thick white ochre, with Yirrkala artists being renowned for their love of the colour and tactility of the pigments in their art. It is quite distinct to work from other regions of Arnhem Land. The work has a wonderful 3-D quality through the layered use of white clay. The addition of this work highlights the growing contribution and recognition of female artists in Arnhem Land and adds depth to the Ancestral stories from Northeast Arnhem Land, rendered innovatively by contemporary artists.

The artist has shown the bees in a style known as ‘Buwayak’ or ‘Invisibility’. These bees are the creators of the honey from these flowers. The continuum between the environment, the art and the sacred foundation of the Marrakulu is completed when the Marrakulu dance as bees in their ceremony elbows extended, hands clutching stringybark leaves which vibrate as wings. These works are the first in this style (with bees painted in white over the design) and the artist explained the use of the style which had been common in portraying objects masked within water by noting that it is very hard to see the tiny bees against the backdrop of the stringybark forest. This body of work comes after her first joint exhibition with her sister in 2006.

Artwork description
This painting is about Wuyal, the Ancestral Sugarbag man, an important ancestor of the Marrakulu clan of North East Arnhem Land. This painting describes his journey during which he named important sites and certain animals. The painting refers also to the continuation of the Marrakulu culture in dance, song and ceremony, which are performed by current generations who have inherited this knowledge and culture from ancestral figures such as Wuyal. This story refers also to important Dhuwa moiety ancestors called the Wawilak sisters. Wuyal was the first man to look for any homeland for the Marrakulu people. He began a journey from Gurka’wuy travelling via Yuduyudu to Cape Shield, up to Trial Bay and along the course of the Goyder River until he came to Mt. Saunders. Travelling along with Wuyal, was Ganyt’jalala. These men are symbolic of the Mri-Guthara (grandparent-grandchild) relationship which describes the relationship between Dtiwuy and Marrakulu clans. Wuyal carried with him tools for hunting animals and for collecting wild honey or sugarbag. The dilly bag, Banduk, worn around his neck, was used to carry the sugarbag called guku. Wuyal used a stone axe, djalpa, to cut down trees in his search for sugarbag. He also carried a stone headed spear for hunting rock wallabies, Dulaku. The stone head of the spear, Guyarra, is made from stone found at a place called Nilipitji. The shaft of the spear is called gudit. Also carried was galpu, a spear-thrower. In their ancestral travels these men travelled alone without wives and conducted what was men’s’ business in ceremony. Wuyal’s ceremonial ground where he danced and conducted sacred ceremony, a place near Buffalo Creek and Mt. Saunders, is called Wandjipuy. The tools were also used in shaping the land. Trees cut down by Wuyal in the search for sugarbag, turned into rivers. The Gurka’wuy River was made in this way. Wuyal also named places by throwing his boomerang, Gunyalili, and giving names to the places where it fell to the ground. From Mt. Saunders he threw his Gunyalili and named a place called Gluru in this way. The design is from the area of Yanawal behind Gurka’wuy (Trial Bay). It refers to spring water running in rivulets between the rocky gorges of this area as Stringybark blossom floats on its surface.
Gulumbu YUNUPINGU
Gumatj/Rrakpala peoples
born c.1945, Biranybirany, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Garak, The Universe
2008 & 2009, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark

Courtesy of the artist and Alcaston Gallery, 2009

This painting refer to two ancestral stories which represent different constellations. Her style is unlike the majority of northeast Arnhem Land art which is almost always based on fine cross-hatching, or *rarrk*, sacred design. The unusual aspect of her work is the lack of figurative representation present in so much of the work from northeast Arnhem Land. Gulumbu’s work is comparably with her peer, renowned Kuninjku artist John Mawurndjul, whose finely detailed abstracted bark paintings and *larrakitj* are highly sought after for private and public collections.

Gan’yu is the Yolngu word for stars and all four barks were created after her entry in the 2003 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. The first story relates to two sisters, Guthayguthay and Nhayay. Guthayguthay is the elder sister and sits [camps] at the biggest fire, with Nhayay sitting at the smaller fire. The elder of the two sisters carries the bigger firewood. In ancestral times the sisters were people, but they turned into stars that sit in the sky under the Milky Way.

When the seasons in Arnhem Land are hot the two sisters argue and sit apart from each other at different fires. These arguments are often over a man called Marrngu. When the seasons are cooler the sisters are seen sitting together by one big fire. They are surrounded by more stars when they are sitting together. When you look in the sky long enough you will see two women figures sitting near two bright stars, which are their fires burning.

The second story is about seven sisters who went out in their canoe called Djulpan. During certain seasons they go hunting for food and always come back with different types of food. They come back with turtle, fish, freshwater snakes and also bush foods like yams and berries. They can be seen at night, seven stars that come out together. The stars come in seasons when the food and berries bloom, with the stars travelling through the sky during that month until the season is over. Gulumbu’s father, Munggurruwuy, told her the story of the seven sisters in a canoe, and the three brothers who followed behind them as they travelled west. There are special stars in the sky which Yolngu call wishing stars. They give Yolngu bush tucker, and they multiply, or ‘increase’ food in the sea – which is why Yolngu are happy to see them return.

When Gulumbu looks at the stars she thinks about the universe, all around, and about every clan, every colour of people who in all corners of the world can look up and see the stars. Gulumbu’s vision, her art is to focus on the links between people everywhere. She links this idea to the *garma*, where people from everywhere can come and relax, look up and see the stars. The larger stars in her art are those visible to the naked eye, with the surrounding dots being those beyond our normal vision. An ancestral being with infinite vision would see nothing but stars covering the entire night sky.

The stars are also spirits of Yolngu who exist within specific bodies of water in northeast Arnhem Land when they are not in corporeal form. They exist in the astral dimension as well as ethereally within the water on an earthly plane. As Gulumbu states emphatically:

*We look UP to the stars, trees grow UP, people sit or stand UP, the poles [larrakitj] stand UP. What do we grow up to…..(looking up)…the stars!*
Gulumbu has only been painting on a major scale since 2002. In Gulumbu’s solo exhibition at Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne in late 2004, the artist paid tribute to her father Munggurruwuy Yunupingu, who told her stories about the two constellations. Gulumbu explains that some stars, gan’yu, are special to Yolngu. When she looks at stars Gulumbu thinks about the universe, all around, every clan, every colour. The link between the people on earth and stars in the sky – it’s real.

The body of work in her solo exhibition, created over the last two years, included all the bark paintings completed by the artist since her initial bark painting entry in the 2003 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, and all the larrakitj (memorial poles) since completing a major commission for the Australian Capital Equity/Kerry Stokes Collection, and her entry in the 2004 Telstra Award.

(Acknowledgments to Alcaston Gallery, 2004)

Gan’yu is the Yolngu word for stars. The first story is about two sisters called Guthayguthay and Nhayay. Guthayguthay is the elder sister and sits at the biggest fire, and Nhayay, who is the youngest sister, has a smaller fire. The elder sister is able to carry bigger fire wood than the younger sister, who can only carry small fire wood. In the olden days these two sisters used to be people, but they turned into stars that sit in the sky under the Milky Way.

When the seasons here are hot the two sisters are arguing and sitting apart from each other with different fires. These arguments are often over a man called Marrngu. When the seasons are cooler the two sisters are seen together sitting by one big fire. They are surrounded by more stars when they are sitting together. When you look in the sky long enough you will see two women figures sitting near two bright stars, which are their fires burning.

The second story is about seven sisters who went out in their canoe called Djulpan. During certain seasons they go hunting for food and always come back with different types of food. They come back with turtle, fish, and freshwater snakes and also bush foods like yams and berries. They can be seen in the sky of a night, seven stars that come out together.

The stars come in season when the food and berries come out, the stars will travel through the sky during that month until the season is over and they don't come out until the next season. Gulumbu’s father told her about these seven sisters in a canoe, and the three brothers who came behind them, following them. They travel west. There are special stars in the sky which Yolngu call wishing stars. They give Yolngu bush tucker; they multiply the foods in the sea - that's why Yolngu are happy to see them. That's what Gulumbu's father told her.

When she looks at the stars, Gulumbu thinks about the universe, all around, and about every tribe, every colour. In every corner of the world people can look up and see the stars. This is Gulumbu’s vision - in her art, she focuses on the link between all people everywhere. The link between people on earth and stars in the sky - it's real. Gulumbu links this idea to the Garma, where people from everywhere can come and relax, look up and see stars.
Ngoia POLLARD NAPALJARRI
Luritja/Warlpiri peoples
born c.1948, Haasts Bluff, Northern Territory

Swamp around Nyrruppi
2004, Haasts Bluff, Northern Territory
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2006   2006.907

Ngoia Napaljarri Pollard paints her father's country. This country is sacred Warlpiri territory with a strong association of narratives relating to 'watersnake'. The oval shapes in her paintings are iconographic representations of the swamps and lakes near Nyrruppi north west of Mt. Liebig where Ngoia lives. In her paintings Ngoia depicts the wet and dry characteristics of Nyrruppi (Talarada), a region charged with the spiritual presence of a 'watersnake' which lives beneath the surface. Ngoia describes this terrain as being dangerous. This area is currently unoccupied Warlpiri land where her father hunted prior to white presence. Ngoia has special custodianship responsibilities over this area. Ngoia was born in Haasts Bluff in the late 1940's. In the 1960's she attended Papunya school along with Lilly Kelly Napangardi. Upon leaving school Ngoia worked in the mission kitchen before moving with her husband Jack Tjakamara/Tjampitjimpa to Kintore. Five years later Ngoia and her husband moved to Mt. Liebig. The move was significant as Mt. Liebig was unoccupied at this time. Living in a humpy, the Pollard family received rations from Papunya on the basis of their status as an outstation. Ngoia remembers this food supply being supplemented with hunting around the Mt. Liebig area. Ngoia's husband died in 1988. Before his death, Ngoia assisted her husband throughout the time he painted for Papunya Tula Artists and began painting her own works in 1997. Ngoia received First Prize in the Centralian Advocate Award 2004.
(Acknowledgments to Neil Murphy Indigenous Art)
Nyapanyapa YUNUPINGU
Gumatj people, Yirritja moiety
born c.1945, Yirrkala region, Northern Territory, Australia

Collecting Wild Apples
2008, Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark

Purchased 2008 2008.946

Nyapanyapa YUNUPINGU (born c. 1945) lives at Yirrkala in remote North-East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Nyapanyapa is an emerging artist who only started painting in the last couple of years. Now in her early 60’s Nyapanyapa’s has developed her distinct, dramatic and exuberant style of painting to depict everyday life and activity in her community.

Nyapanyapa’s paintings on bark are unique for paintings from the Yirrkala region in their energetic roughness and elemental wildness. They are openly playful even in the use of symmetries. They are unusual in that they depict actual events from the artist’s own life as opposed to the inherited stories of tradition.

In August this year she attracted critical acclaim when she won the Wandjuk Marika 3D Memorial Award at the annual 25th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. In her winning work *Incident at Mutpi (1975)*, it shows the drama of when, in 1975, Nyapanyapa was mauled by a water buffalo, her subsequent trip to Darwin Hospital by plane as well as more routine happenings from everyday life and depictions of animals and landscapes. A video accompanied the painting which showed Nyapanyapa telling the story of the event. Her natural theatrics and comical depiction of the event complimented the work beautifully.

(Acknowledgements Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery)

In this latest work *Collecting Wild Apples*, again it shows one of the everyday activities that the women of Yirrkala perform. The linear formations of the trees and the outstretched branches show what appear to be native apples at various stages of growth and several women harvesting them. The raw beauty and rough depictions of this activity combined with the multi shaded background give a real sense of the landscape.
Dorothy NAPANGARDI
Warlpiri people
born c.1950, Mina Mina area, Northern Territory

Sandhills of Mina Mina
2000, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2001 2001.61

Born c.1956 Napangardi is a Warlpiri woman from Mina Mina which is a highly significant site in one of the most remote areas of Australia, the Tanami Desert, north west of Alice Springs. Napangardi is regarded as one of the leading artists of the region. She commenced painting in the public domain in 1987 and works from her own studio at Gallery Gondwana.

Story:
The work mimics the rippling effect of wind on the sandhills of her country of birth, Mina Mina. The delicate but sure nature of the brushwork and the intersection of bands of undulating dots combine to produce a shimmering optical effect that intimates the presence of supernatural forces within the ground.

Napangardi’s style of painting has evolved over the years, starting with the more conventional designs and icons used by women artists in the desert, to a series of paintings which feature net-like images which push and pull the visual picture surface. The latter works are usually executed in a limited palette, usually of white or buff coloured dots against dark backgrounds. Napangardi constantly revisits her earlier work to develop innovative all-over compositions. The work under consideration represents yet another compositional departure where the net-effect has give way to band of undulating dots of the utmost delicacy which are occasionally interrupted by bands of subtle colour.
Josephine NAPURRULA
Pintupi people
born c.1948, Papunya, Northern Territory

Untitled
2007, Kintore, Northern Territory
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2007  2007.384

Josephine NAPURRULA was born in approximately 1948 near a rockhole site where the Tjukula community was later established. She walked to Haasts Bluff with a large group of people as a young girl. NAPURRULA moved between Haasts Bluff and Papunya with her family before later settling in Kintore.

Story:
This painting depicts designs associated with the site of Tjukula in Western Australia, near where the community now stands. The lake and rock holes at this site, as well as the surrounding tali (sandhills) and puli (rocky outcrops), are represented in the painting.
In ancestral times a group of women gathered at Tjukula to perform the dances and sing the songs associated with the area. While at Tjukula the women spun hair which made nyimparra (hair-string skirts), which are worn during ceremonies.
The women later travelled north towards the Kintore region. As they travelled they gathered large quantities of the edible fruit known as pura (also known in Pintupi as pintalypa), or bush tomato, from the small shrub *Solanum chippendalei*. This fruit if the size of a small apricot and after the seeds has been removed, can be stored for long periods by having the fruit and skewering them onto a stick. The women also collected mangata (quandong) from the small tree *Santalum acuminatum*, a traditional staple food much sought after throughout this region.
Shorty JANGALA ROBERTSON  
Warlpiri people, Jangala skin  
born c. 1930, Jila (Chilla Well) at Puyurru, Northern Territory

Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming)  
2005, Yuendumu, Northern Territory  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
Purchased 2006 2006.677

Shorty Jangala Robertson was born at Jila (Chilla Well), a large soakage and claypan northwest of Yuendumu, in the central Australian region of the Northern Territory. He lived a typical hunter-gatherer lifestyle with his parents, older brother and extended Warlpiri family, travelling vast distances across desert country, passing through Warlukurlangu, southwest of Jila, and Ngarlikurlangu, north of Yuendumu, vesting other Jangalas, his skin brothers.

His childhood memories are of stories associated with the 1928 massacres of Aboriginal people by white police at Coniston and at Wantaparri, close to Jila. Shorty Jangala Robertson had virtually no contact with white people during his youth but recalls leaving Jila for Mount Theo ‘to hide’ from being shot. After the death of his father, Shorty and his family moved to Mount Doreen station and subsequently the new settlement of Yuendumu, after the 1967 Australian Citizenship Referendum.

During World War II, Shorty became separated from his mother when the army took people from Yuendumu to the distant settlement of Lajamanu in the north. His mother travelled the distance to find him and together they travelled hundreds of miles on foot back to Jila Well. His working life was hard, undertaken in the Alice Springs/Yuendumu area.

Shorty somehow remained outside of the burgeoning central desert art movement of the 70s and 80s and, as a result, his paintings are distinctive from the ‘Yuendumu School’, and are grounded in his Warlpiri customs. His use of colour to interpret his Jukurrpa (Dreaming) of Ngapa (water), Watiyawarnu (Acacia), Yankirri (Emu) and Pamampardu (Flying Ant) is vital. Although in his 70s and having come to artistic practice since 2000 Shorty is an active member of Warlukurlangu Arts. He lives at Yuendumu with his wife Lady Nungarrayi Robertson, who is also an artist.

The site depicted in this painting is Puyurru, west of Yuendumu. In the usually dry creek bed are the water soakages or naturally occurring wells. Two Jangala men, rainmakers, sang the rain, unleashing a giant storm. It travelled across the country, lightening and striking the land. This storm met up with a storm from Wapurtali, to the west. It was picked up by a bird and carried further west until the load became too heavy for it to bear and it dropped that storm at Purlungyanu, where it created a giant soakage. At Puyurru the bird dug up a giant snake, Wanayarra, the snake carried water with it that created a giant lake, Jillyiumpa. There is an outstation there that Shorty’s family lives at today. In this painting the artist has used straight and wavy lines to represent the ngawarra (flood waters) running through the landscape, and the bars joining the long lines represent mangkurdu (clouds).  
(Acknowledgments to Alcaston Gallery and Warlukurlangu Artists).
Billy BENN PERRURLE
Alyawarre people
born 1943, Artetyerre [Harts Range], Northern Territory

Artetyerre
2008, Utopia, Central Australia, Northern Territory
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2008   2009.20

Billy Benn PERRURLE was born in 1943 on his father’s country, Artetyerre (Harts Range), in the central desert of Australia’s Northern Territory. He was taught how to paint on skin by his two older sisters, Ally Kemerre and Gladdy Kemerre, while living at Kurrjong/Urapuntja (Utopia) as a teenager. Both of these women are now celebrated artists of the Utopia community. Their father was also an artist, making artefacts such as boomerangs, carvings and spears.

PERRURLE has been unable to return to his homeland for many years, and has painted his remarkable landscapes from memory and emotion, ’bringing the country into himself’. A brief but significant return to country has inspired Artetyerre and other recent paintings that seem have a renewed vibrancy to them and offer new and unique perspectives on the country he vows to paint. Now back in Alice Springs, he plans to ‘paint every hill from his country and then he will stop, then he will return home’. (Acknowledgements Bindi Inc. 2008) Billy paints primarily his father’s country. His images are found from memory and feeling, by painting his land Bill brings the country into himself. He plans to paint every hill from his country and then he will stop, then he will return home. Bill’s paintings cover a wide scope of style, born of his own lack of preciousness, his vivid imagination and colour, texture and material experimentation strategies - rather than the study of other painterly influences. Until recently Billy Benn has primarily painted his father’s country on a small but elongated scale. These were intimate images that portrayed the landscape of the country with a wave like grandeur for which he is now known. The size of this early work was largely determined by the discarded old boards of the Alice Springs Timber Mill where he once worked. He painted these off cuts, sometimes as small as 7 (h) x 30 (w) cm, using his fingers and strips of cloth, with glue and paint.

According to Bindi Incorporated, an organisation established to provide employment opportunities, support and advocacy for people with a disability in Alice Springs, ‘his style is born of his own lack of preciousness, his vivid imagination and colour, texture and material experimentation strategies rather than the study of other painterly influences’. (Acknowledgements Bindi Inc. 2008)
Jackie KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES
Pintupi/Ngaanyatjarra peoples
born 1944, Tjamu Tjamu, Western Australia

*Untitled*
2007, Patjarr, Central Australia, Western Australia
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Purchased 2008  2008.198

Jackie Kurltjunyintja GILES was born in 1944 at Tjamu Tjamu east of Kirrirrkurra, Northern Territory, at a kangaroo dreaming site also called Tjamu Tjamu. It was many years of walking over the country and living a nomadic life before travelling over the ranges near Docker River where he found his way to Warburton Mission, Western Australia. By this time he was already a Nagkarri (Traditional healer), a man with great insight and power of spiritual insight and strength to Mr Giles. He is a senior man who travels extensively and is widely respected in the Western Desert. He lives in Patjarr Community, WA with his wife, Yumanu.
(Acknowledgements Short St Gallery)

The story of this work is restricted but relates to the Tingari Cycle of the Western Desert.

*The Tingari people: men, women and children travel north through Wirrintjunku, Pukaritjarra, Tarkal, Yun and Kirritji as they moved towards Tjukurla.*

The Tingari Cycle paintings incorporate iconography which symbolise the ancestral journeys of men, women and children, who travelled from the sea near Port Headland in Western Australia to the northern part of the Western Desert in central Australia. Their creative deeds may be known only to select few, and the imagery of linked concentric circles has come to be understood as the classic iconography of the Pintupi painters of Western Desert art.

Kurltjunyintja GILES is represented by Kayili Artists which is the arts enterprise of the tiny community of Patjarr in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of western Central Australia. They are located at the edge of the vast Gibson Desert Nature Reserve near the Clutterbuck hills, 240 kms north of Warburton. Kayili Artists began operations in September 2004. Their paintings are known for their vibrant colours, raw and uncontrived shapes, and highly traditional origins, linking every work to our Tjukurrpa (law and culture).
(Acknowledgements Kayili Artists)