



Evolution Founders of the Indigenous Art Movement

Curated by Brenda Colahan

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EVOLUTION FOUNDERS OF THE INDIGENOUS ART MOVEMENT

1 - 25 July 2026

Featuring artworks by Albert Namatjira, Emily Kngwarreye, Otto Pareroultja , Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri, Naata Nungurrayi, George Tjungurrayi, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Barbara Weir, Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa (Mrs Bennett), Jorna Newberry, Tommy Watson, Eileen, Makinti, Charlie Tjapangati

This exhibition brings together works by some of the most celebrated figures in Indigenous Australian art, tracing the practice through the artists who shaped its contemporary expression. *Evolution* gathers paintings of remarkable depth, colour and cultural significance.

Curated by Brenda Colahan

As part of Gallery Lane Cove's Guest Curator Program.

YANNIMA PIKARLI | TOMMY WATSON (c. 1935 - 2017)

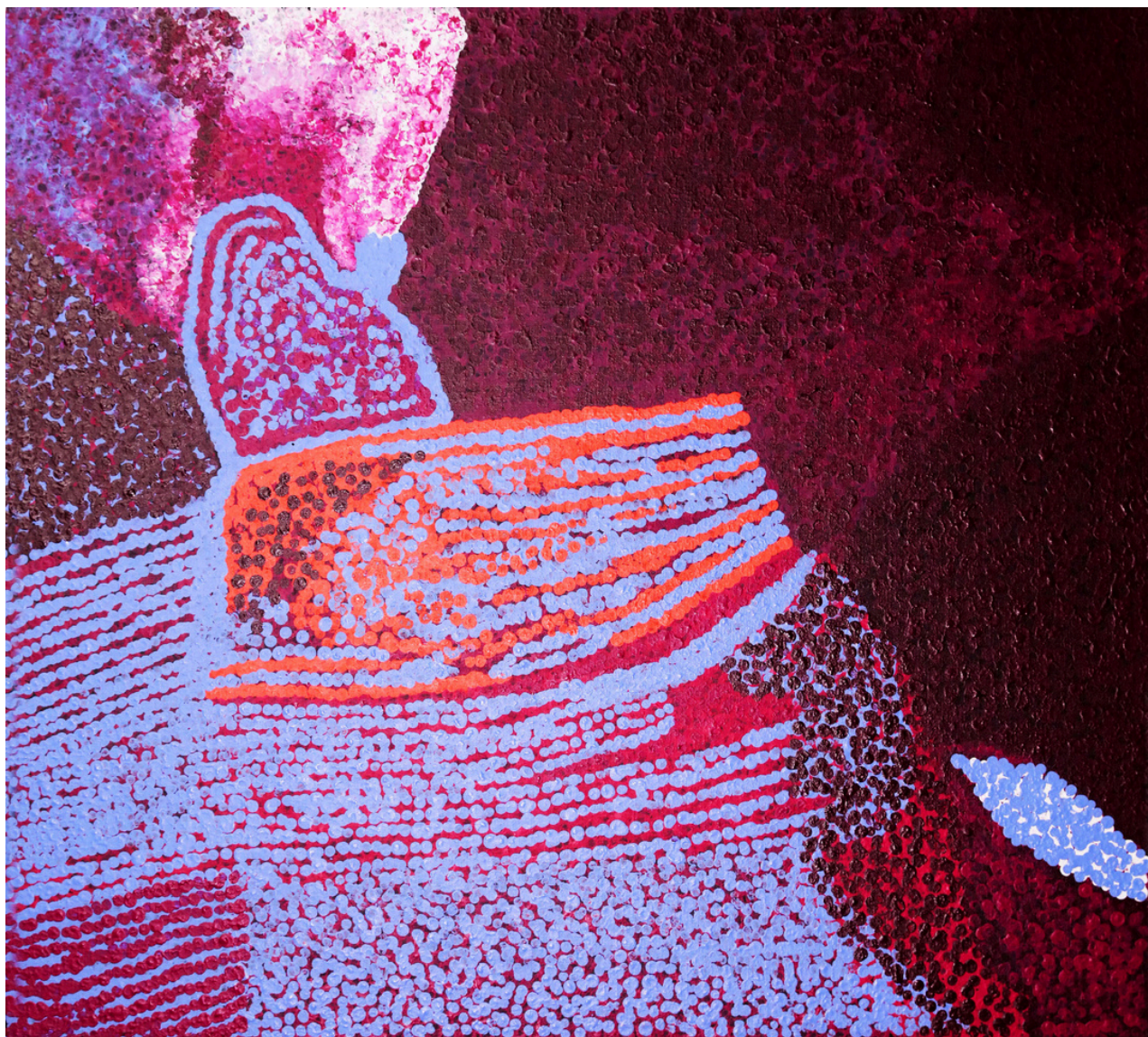
Born Anamarapiti, WA, Pitjantjatjara Language Group, Irrunytju Community.

Tommy Watson is internationally recognized as one of the most significant Aboriginal artists of our time.

As a child he lived a traditional life in the Gibson Desert, where he gained an intimate understanding of the environment and his Tjukurrpa (ancestral stories).

Tommy 'walked in' from the desert in his teens and by his adult years, had travelled to other communities, including Hermannsburg, where he witnessed Albert Namatjira - the trailblazer of Indigenous Australian art, paint his famous watercolours.

A profound colorist himself, Watson was a pioneer of the contemporary Indigenous art movement



Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson

***Walunja*, 2015**

Acrylic on Belgian linen

102 x 112cm

Catalogue #: TW201577; Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

POA



Yannima Pikarli Tommy Watson

Kungkarankalpa, 2014

Acrylic on Belgian linen

112 x 102cm

Catalogue #: TW2014142

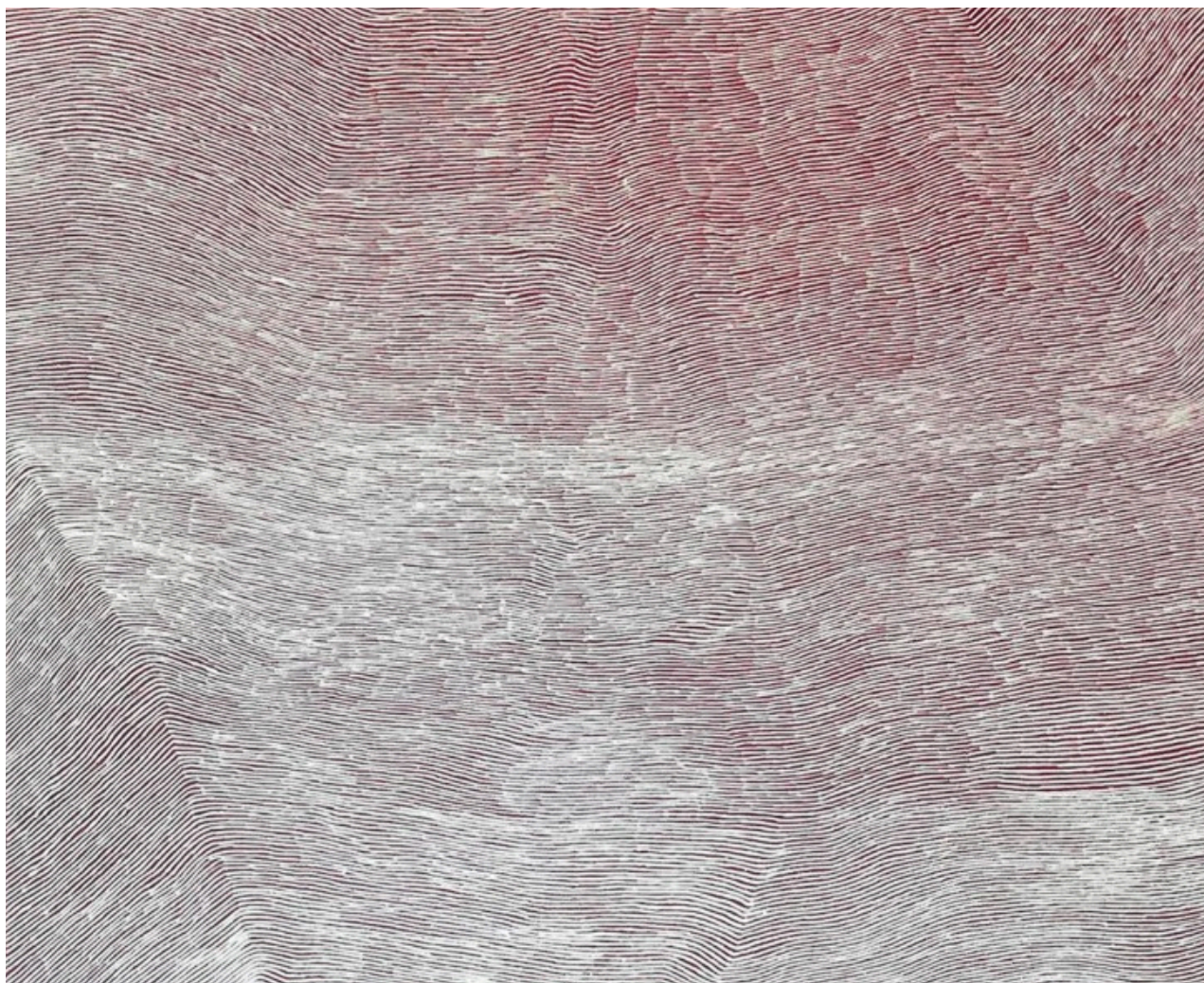
POA

GEORGE TJUNGURRAYI (c. 1943)

Born Walawala, Kiwirrkurra, WA, Pintupi/Luritja/Ngaatjatjarra
Language Group, Kintore Community, NT

George Tjungurrayi (Hairbrush) began painting in 1976 for Papunya Tula. While the traditional aesthetic of Western Desert painting is notable in his early work, he has developed a distinctly minimalist style that not only engages with the striking linear quality of early Pintupi painting but is also inherently distinguishable as his own.

Tjungurrayi's paintings depict the topographical reference points of his ancestral country, particularly those that reflect sites of cultural significance within Pintupi culture.



George Tjungurrayi

***Mamultjulkunga*, 2015**

Synthetic polymer on Belgian linen

151 x 181cm

Catalogue #: GT201508; Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

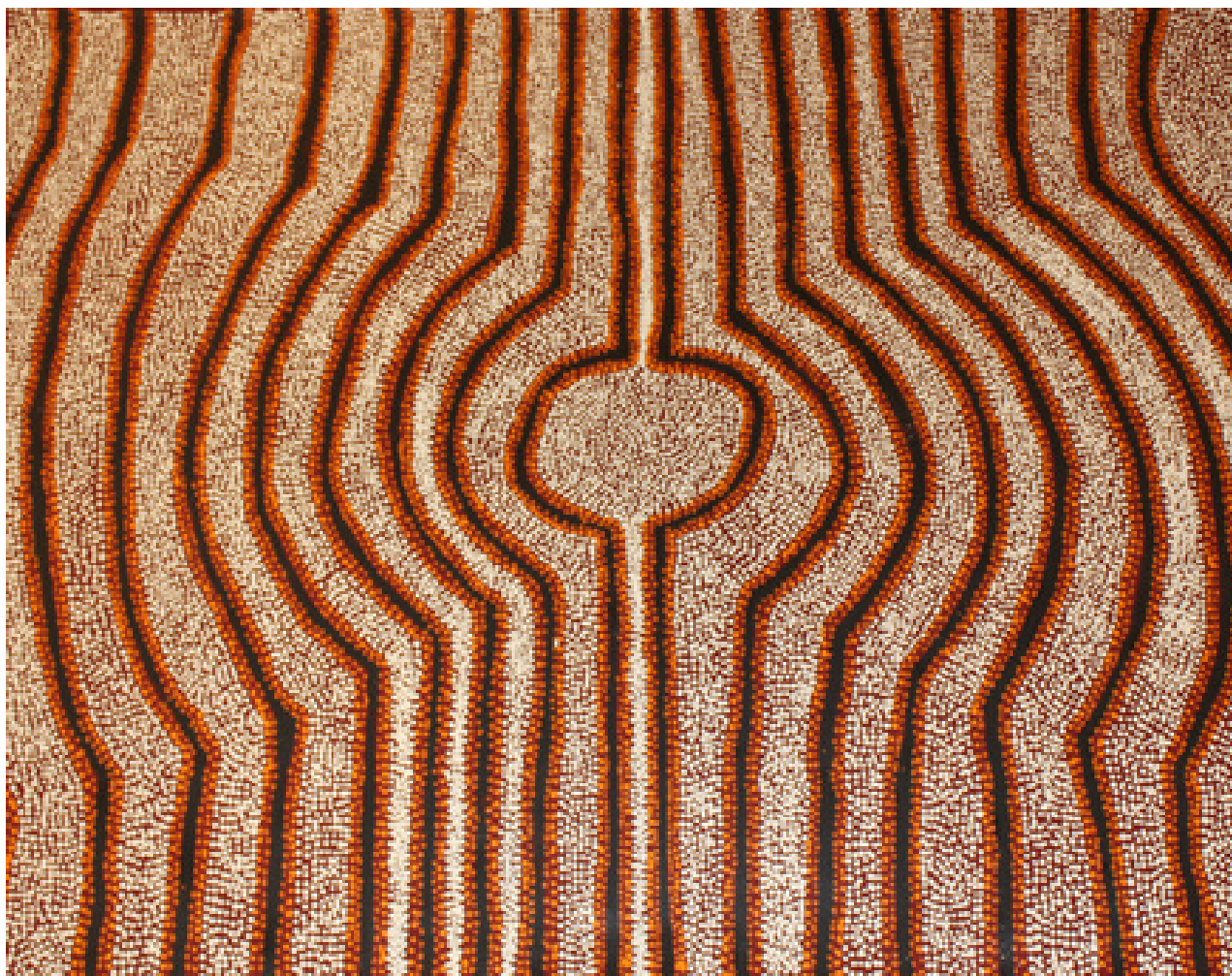
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EILEEN NAPALTJARRI (C. 1956-2024)

Born Haasts Bluff, NT, Pintupi Language Group, Kintore Community, NT

Familiar with the Papunya Tula Movement through her father, Charlie Tararu Tjunurrayi, a founding member, in addition Eileen's mother was also a successful artist with the company. By the 1990's Eileen started to explore her own distinctive style which represents stories from her father's ancestral country at Tjitjurrulnga (also known as Titjurrulpa rock hole), located west of Kintore.

Long rows of sandhills form rhythmic patterns across the canvas, her recurring motif of shimmering light forming the basis of her oeuvre-the result is simply illuminating



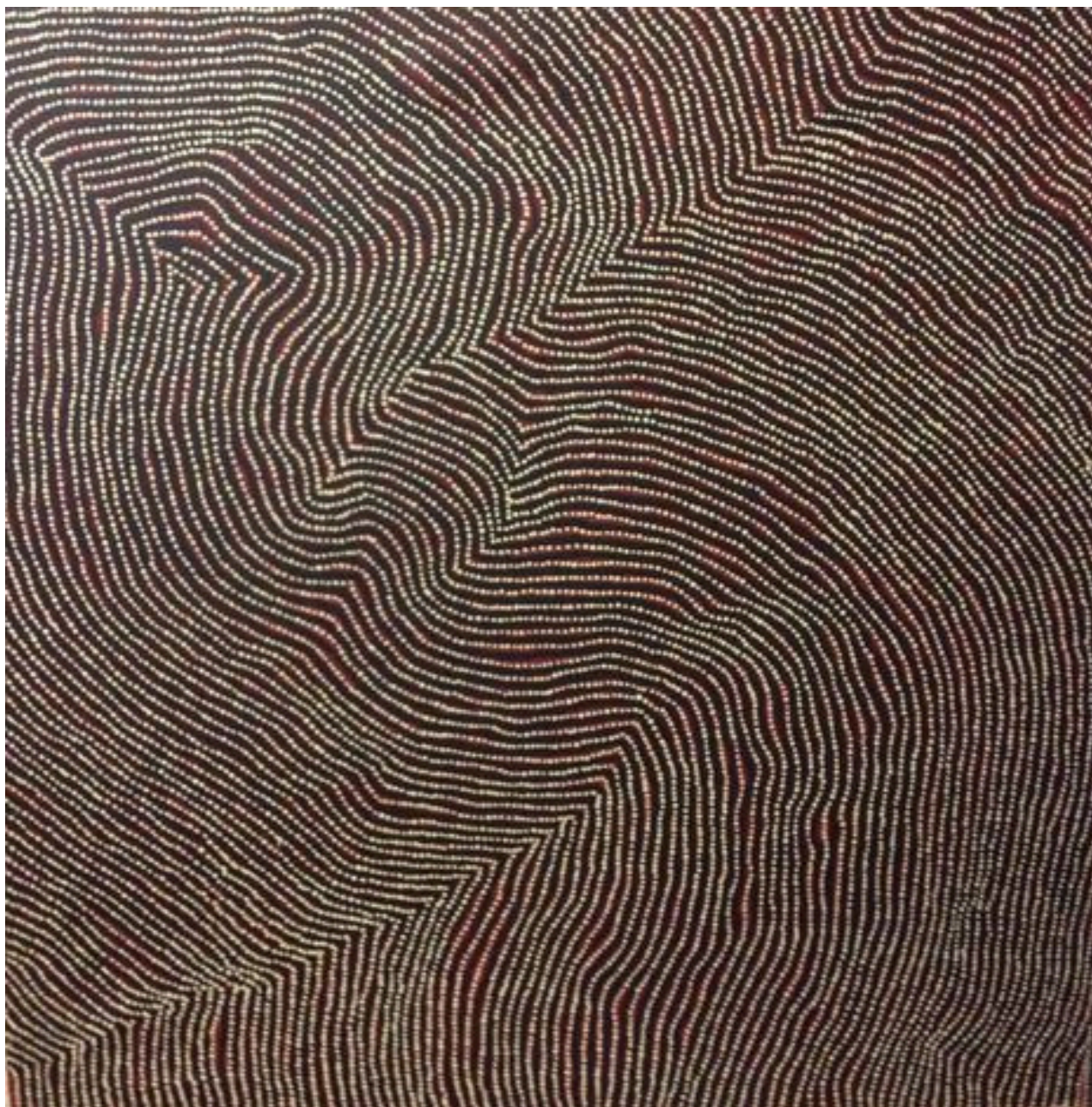
Eileen Napaltjarri
***Tali - Many Sandhills*, 2018**
Acrylic on Belgian linen
122 x 151cm
Catalogue # EIN201805
POA

CHARLIE TJAPANGATI (C. 1949-2021)

Born Jupiter Well, near Kiwirrkurra, WA, Pintupi Language Group, Kintore Community

Charlie Tjapangati started painting in 1977 for Papunya Tula while he was living in West Camp, Papunya, NT. The older artists greatly influenced him and his style, which typically tells the stories of the Tingari Cycle.

Charlie's work is included in the collections of the National Museum of Australia and The Art Gallery of NSW. He was included in the Genesis and Genius exhibition and is included in notable private collections in Australia and abroad off NSW. He was included in the Genesis and Genius exhibition and is included in notable private collections in Australia and abroad.



Charlie Tjapangati

***Untitled*, 2018**

Acrylic on Belgian linen

122 x 122 cm

Yanda Aboriginal Art: #CT201815

POA

NAATA NUNGURRAY (C. 1930-2021)

Born Kumilnga, Pollock Hills WA, Pintupi Language Group,
Kintore/Kiwirrkura Community

Naatas paintings depict her country Walawala as well as women's ceremonies around the Marrapinta, a sacred waterhole west of Pollock Hills. Other sacred sites and resting places for travelling ancestral women include the Ngaripunkunya rockhole west of Kiwirrkurra; the Wirrulnga rockhole east of Kiwirrkurra; Ngaminya rockhole south and Wanku and Piti Kutjarra soakages northwest of Kiwirrkurra.

Naata often painted her home which is Karilwara, two rockholes located northwest of Kiwirrkurra. Her dreaming stories depict women gathering Kampurapara (desert raisins) which are eaten straight from the plant or ground into a flour and baked.



Naata Nungurray

***Marrapinti*, 2009**

Synthetic polymer on Belgian linen

183 x 244cm

Catalogue # NA200967; Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

POA

EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE (c. 1910-1996)

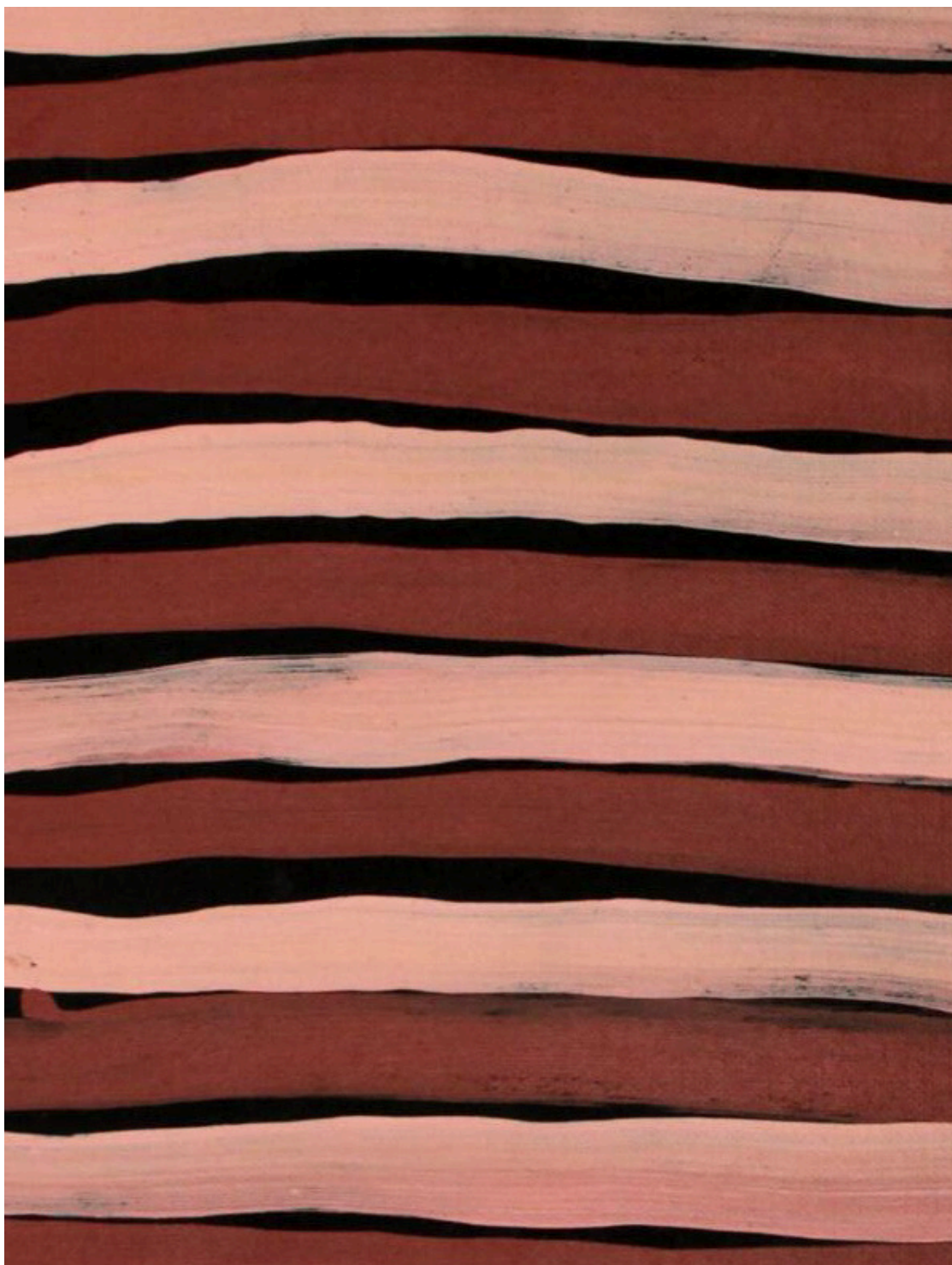
Born Alhalkere, Utopia, NT, Anmatyerr, Central Desert region Language Group, Alhalkere Community.

Whenever Emily was asked to explain her paintings, regardless of whether the images were a shimmering veil of dots, a field of 'dump dump' dots, raw stripes seared across the surface or elegant black lines, her answer was always the same:

“Whole lot, that’s whole lot, Awelye (my Dreaming), arlatyeye (pencil yam), arkerrthe (mountain devil lizard), ntange (grass seed), tingu (Dreamtime pup), ankerre (emu), intekwe (favourite food of emus, a small plant), atnwerle (green bean), and kame (yam seed). That’s what I paint, whole lot.”

- National Museum of Australia:

The genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye.



Emily Kame Kngwarreye

***Body Paint*, 1994**

Synthetic polymer on linen

31 x 41cm

Catalogue #: SS1197102

POA



Emily Kame Kngwarreye

***Body Paint*, 1995**

Synthetic polymer on linen

90 x 61cm

catalogue #: SS119782 Dacau

POA



Emily Kame Kngwarreye

***Yam Dreaming*, 1995**

Synthetic polymer on linen

32 x 62cm

Catalogue #:SS119747; Dacou

POA

BARBARA WEIR (c. 1940-2023)

Born Bundy River Station, NT, Alyawarre/Anmatyerre Language Group,
Utopia Community

Barbara was born in the region of Utopia, northeast of Alice Springs and her mother was the late Minnie Pwerle, a renowned Utopia and Australian artist. Her childhood was disrupted when at age 10, Barbara was taken from her family by a welfare patrol - she is one of the stolen generation

On returning to her home in 1977, Barbara quickly rekindled her unique relationship with Emily Kame Kngwarreye. By 1996, after the death of Emily, Barbara developed her own skills as an artist with a contemporary style and strong colour palette. Her famous Grass Seed and Mother's Country paintings quickly attracted the attention of collectors here and abroad.



Barbara Weir

***Grass Seeds Dreaming*, 2017**

Acrylic on Belgian Linen

156 x 123cm

Catalogue: BWAKFA01

Signed verso

POA

ALBERT NAMATJIRA (C. 1902-1959) | BORN HERMANNSBURG, NT

Western Arrernte, Central Desert Region Language Group, Western Arrernte Community

“Initially thought of as having succumbed to European pictorial idioms – and for that reason, to ideas of European privilege over the land – Namatjira’s landscapes have since been re-evaluated as coded expressions on traditional sites and sacred knowledge. Ownership of country is hereditary, but detailed knowledge of what it ‘contains’ is learnt in successive stages through ceremony, song, anecdote and contact.”

- George Alexander in '*Tradition today: Indigenous art in Australia*' AGNSW, Sydney, 2014



Albert Namatjira
Ghost Gum, c. 1950s
Watercolour on paper
24 x 36cm
NFS

OTTO PAREROULTJA (1914-1973)

Otto Pareroultja, eldest of the Pareroultja brothers and a member of the Arunta tribe, was a pioneering Aboriginal watercolourist. Working at the Lutheran Hermannsburg Mission in Central Australia, Otto was inspired by Albert Namatjira and Rex Battarbee to develop his own distinctive approach to landscape painting. His watercolours are characterised by rhythmic, repetitive brushstrokes that suggest movement and atmosphere.

Attending mission school, he worked various jobs before briefly joining the Army Labor Gang in 1942. Reuben began painting full-time in 1945, distinguishing himself from other Hermannsburg artists by exploring figurative subjects, including people and wildlife. While encouraged by Rex Battarbee, resonance. Otto's work often depicts mountains, twisted trees, and the unique contours of the Central Australian country, blending Aboriginal perspectives with European painting techniques. His first solo exhibition in 1947 was met with critical acclaim.

Otto Pareroultja's works are held in major national collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, and the National Gallery of New South Wales.



Otto Pareroutja

Western MacDonnell Ranges

Watercolour on paper

38 x 51cm

John Worthington Hermannsburg Collection

Elders Fine Art Lot 112

Signed lower

POA

MAKINTI NAPANANGKA (c. 1930-2011)

Born Lake MacDonal, WA, Pintupi Language Group, Kintore Community, NT

In 1995, as a member of the Haasts Bluff-Kintore painting project, Makinti was introduced to acrylic painting and quickly developed a distinctive style, characterised by spontaneity and loose brush strokes. For many years she was the most senior woman painting with the Papunya Tula Artists.

Painting imagined designs associated with the travels of the Kungka Kutjarra (Two Women), capturing the sweeping arc pattern of the hair-string skirts (Lupulnga) worn in ceremony. In this early example, the rarer Mugilypa Shrub, the native flora surrounding the rockhole site of Lupulnga, is captured by Makinti.



Makinti Napanangk

***Untitled (Mugilypa Shrub)*, 1999**

Synthetic polymer on linen

38 x 46cm

Catalogue #: MN991187; Papunya Tula Artists, NT

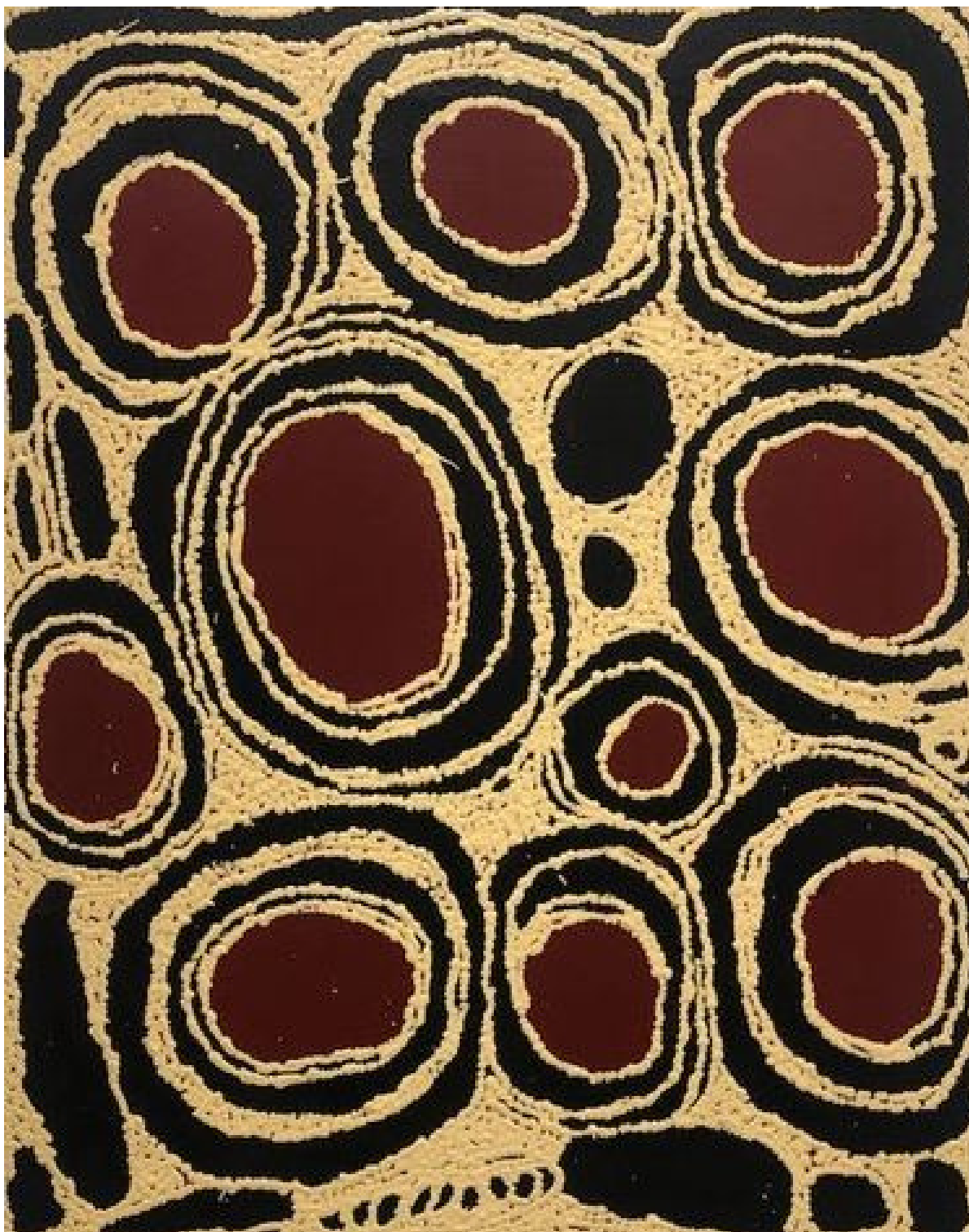
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BNYURAPAYIA NAMPITJINPA | MRS BENNETT (c. 1935-2013)

Born Yumarra, Western Desert region, Pintupi Language Group, Yamari Western Desert Community

Also known as Mrs. Bennett, in 1994, she, Naata Nungurrayi and other senior women from Haasts Bluff and Kintore, were introduced to painting materials for a collaborative project on canvas. Living at Kintore, she always strove to maintain an individual style in her mark making. This individualism resulted in Mrs Bennett becoming one of the most respected Western Desert women artists.

Strong colour contrasts in her work, typically blacks and pale yellows/creams against a strong red background, reminiscent of the sun setting over the landscape and rocks, and the red earth at the waterholes of Punkilpirri- her ancestral home.



Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa (aka Mrs. Bennett)

Untitled, 2011

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

71 x 56cm

Catalogue #: MRSB201115 Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

NFS



Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa (aka Mrs. Bennett)

Untitled

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

71 x 56cm

Catalogue #: JJC123 Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

NFS



Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa (aka Mrs. Bennett)

Untitled, 2011

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

71 x 56cm

Catalogue #: JJC36 Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

NFS



Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa (aka Mrs. Bennett)

Untitled

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

71 x 56cm

Catalogue #: JJC126 Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

NFS

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA (C. 1943-2023)

Born Tjiturrunya, Kintore, NT, Pintupi Language Group, Kintore Community

Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was one of the youngest of the group of men who began painting at the start of the Western Desert art movement in 1971 and was a founder of Papunya Tula Artists. After settling at Walungurru (Kintore) in 1981, Ronnie became renowned for his distinctive bold, linear style.

Early works depicted iconography from the Tingari Cycles, whilst his vibrant red and orange Fire tjukurrpa works have become some of the most iconic paintings from the movement.



Ronnie Tjampitjinpa

Bushfire Dreaming, 2007

Synthetic polymer on Linen

203 x 300cm

Catalogue #: A10688; Muk Muk

POA



Ronnie Tjampitjinpa

***Untitled (Tingari)*, 2007**

Synthetic polymer on Linen

122 x 91cm

Catalogue 3: 3624RT; Gallery Gondwana

POA

WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI (C. 1958)

Born Tjuurlnga in the Angus Hills, East of Kiwirrkurra, WA, Pintupi Language Group, Kiwirrkura Community Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri is one of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary Aboriginal artists and a leading figure in the movement.

An abstract recreation of his ancestral Tjukurrpa, his work depicts the sacred landscapes of Lake Mackay and Marawa, a clay pan to its west – which recur in the travels of the Pintupi Tingari ancestors.

The elaborate topographical patterns of his paintings are created with thousands of delicately dotted, concentric lines- the whole producing a mesmerizing optical effect.



Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri

Marrawa, 2019

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

181 x 244cm

WTJ005 Yanda Aboriginal Art, NT

NFS

JORNA NEWBERRY (C. 1959 – 2025)

Pitjantjatjara artist, born around 1959 at Angus Downs in the Northern Territory.

Jorna Newberry lives between the communities of Warakurna and Irrunytju and the township of Alice Springs where she has family. In travelling from the remote communities to the town, Jorna Newberry continues to live both the traditional Aboriginal culture of her indigenous background and the contemporary culture of modern Australia.

Jorna Newberry is the niece of famous Aboriginal artist Tommy Watson. When visiting her lands she regularly goes bush with the women of her community to participate in traditional ceremonies. Jorna Newberry began painting in mid 1990s at Warakurna, and later joined painters at the Irrunytju Art Centre.

Over recent years Jorna Newberry has worked closely alongside her legendary uncle, Tommy Watson. She follows his instruction to favour abstraction as a stylistic means to ensure secrecy of important indigenous cultural matters, rather than taking a more figurative approach.



Jorna Newbury

***Walpa- wind dreaming*, 2014**

Synthetic polymer on Belgian Linen

91 x 122cm

Cat # JRB201404

POA

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