

BALGO

Contemporary Australian Art
from the Balgo Hills

On behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander program, I am pleased to present the exhibition, *BALGO: Contemporary Australian Art from the Balgo Hills*. This is one of the most impressive exhibitions which DFAT has toured overseas in order to promote greater understanding and awareness of Australia's Indigenous cultures.

The artworks in this exhibition, which are more colourful than the Indigenous artworks that many viewers would be familiar with, convey the energy and dynamism of the culture of the mainly Kukatja language-speaking artists at the Warlayirti Artists Art Centre in the Balgo Hills region.

Consisting of contemporary paintings and etchings, the exhibition also presents a range of stories that demonstrate the strong connection Aboriginal people have with their traditions and the ways in which they are being maintained today.

Balgo is produced by DFAT in conjunction with Artbank, the Australian Government's art rental program. All the works have been sourced from the Artbank Collection, and Artbank is also making its expertise available to present the exhibition for its international tour.

I am confident that this fascinating exhibition from the Balgo Hills, in my home State of Western Australia, will engage you and promote a deeper understanding of the rich and vibrant culture of Aboriginal Australia.

Stephen Smith MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs

Artbank, the Australian Government's contemporary art rental initiative, is delighted to be working once again with the Images of Australia Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to produce an exciting new touring exhibition illustrating the strength and vibrancy of Australia's Indigenous art. *BALGO: Contemporary Australian Art from the Balgo Hills* brings together some of the finest contemporary Indigenous art to tour internationally. The exhibition offers a riot of colour and energy while exploring in depth the stories, history and lives of these extraordinary artists.

The exhibition comprises a selection of significant artworks from the Artbank Collection including an important suite of prints by senior Balgo artists expressly acquired for the show. Artists include some of the most respected Balgo painters – already acknowledged as stars by the international art world – and some of the exciting new generation of emerging artists.

Artbank has demonstrated, throughout its 28 years of operation, a commitment to collecting Indigenous art of the highest quality. Our ongoing relationship with DFAT enables us to exhibit the best examples of these works in missions throughout the world. This partnership has promoted an increased understanding of Indigenous Australian culture among international audiences, and we hope the Balgo exhibition further enhances their knowledge and appreciation.

Geoffrey Cassidy
Director, Artbank



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



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Balgo. In Australia, it's a word that conjures colour and exuberance. It invokes an art which is both ancient and contemporary; both abstract and yet redolent of landscape; both spiritual and political.

When acrylic paintings from Balgo, deep in the Western Desert of central Australia, first appeared in the 1980s they shook up what the world understood as 'traditional' Indigenous art and disrupted our complacency about what was *contemporary* about contemporary art. Bold, bright and colourful, the paintings told stories of the land – what Indigenous Australians call 'country' – in a way that seemed utterly modern, apparently abstract, and quite exceptional.

But, like the ground-breaking paintings from Papunya in the Central Desert that had hit the international spotlight some years before, Balgo art presented a paradox. Deeply conventional, in the sense of conveying important Dreaming stories and tribal law, these paintings were some of the most mythologically intense and *traditional* the Indigenous peoples of Australia had yet produced. And yet they were being made by contemporary people, using new acrylic media, and in a style that seemed to recall Western modernist abstraction.

Before long, it was this very paradox that began to contribute resoundingly to our understanding of contemporary life, art and spirituality in Indigenous Australia. In short, art from Balgo is a revelation; an art that is a statement of survival, not only of a people, but of their religion and law, their land and their spirit.

The community at Balgo Hills

The small community of Balgo Hills lies in northeast Western Australia in country most often simply called 'remote'. Indeed to the rest of the world, and the majority of Australia, the

surrounding Great Sandy, Gibson and Tanami Deserts seem another world away. Darwin is 900 kilometres to the north, while the state capital of Perth is some 1,800 kilometres southwest. The closest town of Halls Creek is 'only' 300 kilometres away, but on the rough desert roads, getting there can take up to five hours by car.

The name Balgo is said to come from the Kukatja word 'Palgu' meaning 'dirty wind'. It was a site established by priests of the German Catholic Pallottine Order as a mission in 1939, some kilometres away from the present site of Balgo Hills. The priests set up the mission as a refuge for groups of previously nomadic peoples who had been, through the long slow process of the colonisation of Australia's desert heartland, displaced and their population decimated by violence and disease.

Dispossessed of their lands and livelihoods, many Kukatja – including tribal members who became today's revered artists – had not seen white people (*kartiya*) until they came in from the desert to the Balgo mission seeking food and shelter. There, unlike at other mission settlements, the priests and sisters encouraged local language use and Aboriginal customs, allowing traditional culture to be maintained. Also, as many Kukatja were 'grown up' in the old ways and had been initiated in the desert before they encountered Christianity, they carried with them to the mission an already formed intimate and deep knowledge of their sacred Dreaming territory.

In 1965, the mission was moved to the new site at Balgo Hills, also known by the local Kukatja people as Wirrimanu, along the Dreaming path of the Luurnpa (the Ancestral Kingfisher) at the northern perimeter of shared Kukatja and Walmajarri lands.

The shared lands of the Western Desert are important to an understanding of Balgo identity. When the mission at Balgo was set up, it brought together a number of different Western Desert language groups including Kukatja – which is the majority language spoken at Balgo – Ngardi, Walmajarri, Tjaru, Wangkatjungka, Warlpiri and Pintupi. These language groups are known collectively as Kutjungka, meaning 'at one' or 'being of one culture'. Many Kutjungka also have family and cultural ties to other desert communities including Papunya, a thousand kilometres to the north.

Different stylistic conventions from the surrounding areas of Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Lajamanu and Yuendumu, also came together in this new settlement, and in the late 1970s several Papunya artists visited Balgo. These cultures remained alive in the community, whose very remoteness may have protected it from the cultural degradation that occurred in others: to a great extent, those exiled from their traditional country were able to preserve and continue their culture, recalled through the clear lens of memory, to this day.

Dreaming and Country

The Western Desert landscape is arid desert country, marked by *tali* (sandhills or dunes) and red earth; a place where *jila*, or permanent 'living' water, and the knowledge of its whereabouts, is critical to survival. It is a land filled with salt lake systems and peppered with dry spinifex grasses. It is marked by mesas and claypans, deep *warniri* (rockholes) and *tjurnu* (soakwaters) – and the plentiful flowers, animals and bush foods those water sources bring when full.

Kukatja land runs across Australia's central heart from Lake MacKay in the south, east to the Northern Territory, and west to the Stansmore Ranges. Balgo is an important place

for myth-lines that stem from that land and were laid down during the Tjukurrpa or Dreaming. It was, and still is, a site of ritual exchange, where every aspect of the desert has a metaphysical reality.

The Dreaming (in Kukatja, known as Tjukurrpa) is a complex and holistic concept that refers to a time of mythological Ancestral Beings or Sky Heroes, to Law (or the system of moral governance) and to religious beliefs. More forcefully put, as understood by the Kukatja and other Kutjungka, Tjukurrpa is Indigenous religion, and just like many other world religions, it is peopled by mythical shape-shifting creatures and creator spirits and learnt through scripture and parables. The stories – which are rich and filled with epic journeys and accounts of love and sexual exploits, with brutal punitive deaths and recurring life – offer moral teachings and warnings to those who learn them.

The Dreaming is a primordial time, a 'time before time', when the world attained form and all animals and plants came into being as the ancestral heroes fashioned the land as they travelled. However, for initiated people, it is also considered to be both *reality* and ever-present. That is, the Dreaming is both outside time and a part of ongoing time.

It is through the Dreaming that a person is linked to his or her country. Dreaming ancestors are incarnated in present-day tribal members in specific geographical areas. Not only does this mean that Tjukurrpa stories, which in turn become paintings, are therefore 'site-specific' but it also reveals how Aboriginal history can be understood as spatial rather than time-based.

The notion of the Dreaming lies at the heart of Indigenous art production. Paintings, like songs or ceremonies before them, are part of a grand

design or moral system and represent a point where time collides, where ancient knowledge is re-enacted in the here and now. Painting, just as ceremony, is a ritual act where, as anthropologist A.P. Elkin has said, the life-giving Dreaming myths 'break into the present from the heroic past'.

It is the sacred places where the ancestor beings touched the ground on their Tjukurrpa journeys that form the principal themes of Balgo art today. These places – rockholes or hillsides, waterholes or the plants used as bush tucker – are all the result of generations of metamorphosis from ancient ancestor to their current form, and have the potential to transform once again into today's custodian of that particular Dreaming. The places and forms are re-enacted, re-embodied and re-presented on canvas and in painting them, each artist retains in acrylic a metaphysical trace of the sacred site. In so doing, they also express and sustain their cultural and spiritual authority.

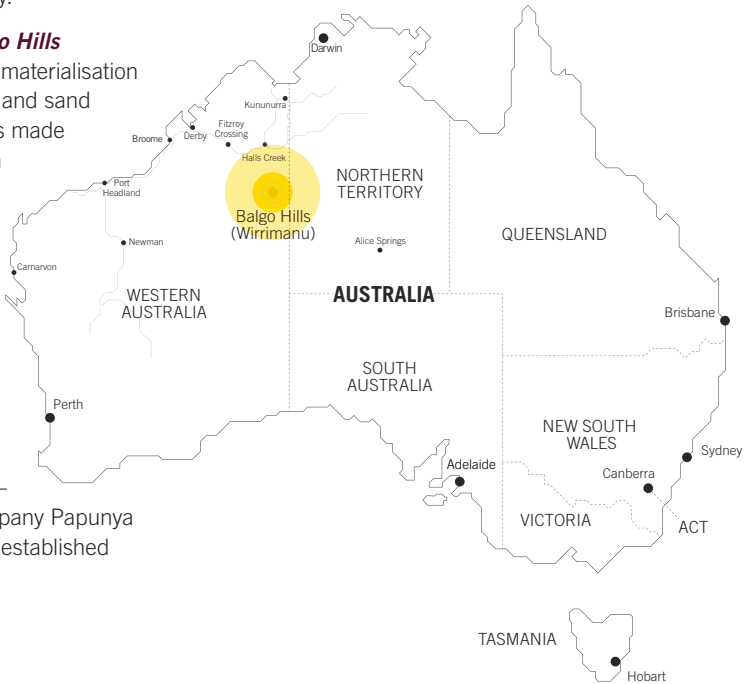
The contemporary art of the Balgo Hills

The move from the millennia-long materialisation of ceremony through song, dance and sand drawing to the creation of artworks made for sale, started with the collection of artefacts by anthropologists in the mid 1940s. But it was not until the late 1970s, after the explosion of interest in desert art that followed the outpouring of paintings from Papunya, that Balgo artists started to produce small painted boards and designs on paper and calico. Motivated by the success of their Papunya family members – and the Aboriginal owned art company Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd that had been established

in 1972 – Balgo artists saw the potential for their own community in using the acrylic medium, but it was an unhurried and steady start.

When the Adult Education Centre was established in Balgo in 1981, courses such as 'traditional art and culture' and 'modern art' were introduced and local Kukatja people were encouraged to paint their Tjukurrpa on canvas. That same year Balgo became an Aboriginal controlled community providing the Indigenous population with more political control and influence.

Strong community interest in new materials and techniques was weighed up against a very real concern about the revelation of ceremonial material of a secret nature; something the Papunya elders had earlier had to address. The production in 1981 of a group of celebratory banners in acrylic as well as traditional ochres – 'sung' by Balgo elders to give them ancestral power – were a bridge between traditional



ground drawings and the new medium of acrylic painting. This was perhaps the final step towards the approach to painting that the Balgo community is known for today.

The exhibition *Art from the Great Sandy Desert*, held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1986, was another milestone for the Balgo artists. It was the first introduction of Kutjungka art to the broader public and importantly, the art establishment of collectors, curators and gallerists. The presentation of small canvas boards and church panels included a significant body of work by the senior lawman Sunfly Tjampitjin and early work by some of Balgo's senior contemporary artists Eubena Nampitjin and Bai Bai Napangarti. It heralded a turning point in the community's artistic future and its relevance to contemporary Australian Aboriginal art.

A year after their Perth exhibition debut the community art centre, Warlayirti Artists Aboriginal Corporation, was established (Warlayirti being another name for Luurnpa, the Ancestral Kingfisher leader of the Kukatja people). Like many other art centres, it became one of the few avenues of independent employment for local Indigenous people and a hub of artistic expression, cultural education and spiritual retention, career development, political independence and social gathering.

Art centres like Warlayirti reveal in microcosm the greater picture of Indigenous art's strong links with the economy – as both big international business and the simple apparatus for providing a wage to many desert people. But for the artists, no matter who the audience for their paintings, those economic links can never be separated from the social, nor from the systems of cosmological belief that underpin Indigenous artistic production.

Art and iconography

When artists from Balgo paint the Tjukurrpa of their ancestral country, those journeys that are at the heart of Kutjungka art, sacred geography is recalled and embodied in every action and every depiction of its contemporary incarnation.

Ancestral journeys and the country through which ancestors pass are represented by metaphysical schema that include paths, landscape features, symbols – all of which have a spiritual force working in and through them. Nature to the Kutjungka people does not mean (simply) the grass or water or weather. To a Balgo artist, it means how things *should be* in the exemplary Dreaming. Depicting nature carries with it the ultimate goal of evoking the Dreaming knowledge of the artist and the sacred implications of the country he or she depicts.

Spiritual and intellectual, these are not landscape paintings in the conventional Western European sense. Nor perhaps are they religious in the way in which a westerner might picture a scriptural vignette recorded as history. This art is a meditation on the Dreaming, where landscape is used to evoke a cosmic art that is constantly renewed at the same time that it is recalled as myth. Country equals story; land equals art; art equals spirit.

For the artists from Balgo, painting is not a mimetic rendering of a place, but is a social interaction performed through time and space, and is as much iconic as narrative. Based on symbolism and affect, the icons in Balgo art are more fluid than the signs used by Indigenous people from other nearby linguistic groups, and often signify several things at once. A semicircle may represent a windbreak or a hill or a camp or, pinched more into a U shape, may represent the people who gather there.

Perhaps as the result of over 60 years of association with the Catholic Church, Balgo iconography also has more naturalistic and representational signs than other Western Desert 'styles'. Artists like Susie Bootja Bootja might incorporate a recognisable footprint or two to indicate where evil men once roamed the land and the fires where they cooked people along the way. Boxer Milner often shows, in an essentially realistic way, what's known as 'milkwater', where the waters of the creeks in his country have turned white from the clay leaching from their upper regions.

Balgo iconography comes in part from ritual or religious sources as they are transferred to bodies or ceremonial objects, or from rock paintings found in secret male and female sacred sites. Indeed, the gender of sites and the division of ceremonial activities along male and female lines is an important aspect of the iconography available to artists.

All of these and other symbols, which relate to anything from bush food like *walku* (bush apple), *tjirrilpartja* (bush carrots), *kantilli* (bush raisin) and more, to current events which become integrated with ancient places, form the basis for Balgo painting.

Most directly, paintings and their attendant symbols come directly out of traditions of sand painting or sand drawing, and from body painting where skin is marked up for ceremony with lines of alternating light and dark dots. To the Kutjungka people there is a real relationship between the ground and the body, and as the land is seen as sentient and conscious, its features are comparable to the features of the human body. It has been said that the ground is the focus of Indigenous life, as the place on which one sits, rests and walks. The ground has always been the place that Kutjungka

people drew in, making marks (*kuruwarri*) that anticipate lines of paint; telling stories about hunting and gathering, or recalling ancestral journeys and recognising Dreaming sites.

Sand drawing stories are like songs, leading participants through a process of learning, recognition, and re-enactment, and part of initiation is learning to recognise the key features in a song or the signs in the sand. These signs reappear in paintings, in turn becoming enmeshed, for initiates, with deeper meanings about the ancestors, their deeds, and how they metamorphosed into the hills, trees or rocks that are signified.

The artists and their works

Warlayirti Artists are known for their vivid palettes and planar geometric compositions. That said, their art is *communicative*, not decorative. The art is abstract, but not in the sense that the word is used in relation to Western modernism: here, abstraction is used in a much older sense of the term, as a concept or schema for what is known to be in existence.

Just as a Dreaming has an individual custodian, so each artist reveals a unique interpretation of their subject, their Tjukurrpa. The ideographic approach of older initiated artists coexists with the innovations of those younger artists who grew up on the mission. As a result diverse individual styles have emerged such as Lucy Yukenbarri's *kinti-kinti* (literally meaning close-close and referring to the placement of dots so closely next to each other that they form a scalloped line); Susie Bootja Bootja's innovative dotted colour fields; Helicopter Tjungurrayi's striking parallel lines that direct us to his central soakwater motifs; Boxer Milner's graphic abstractions of his flooded Sturt Creek terrain, and the painterliness with which Eubena Nampitjin approaches the country of her youth.

Both Bob Dingle Tjapanangka and John Lee Tjakamarra's subject here is Luurnpa, the Ancestral Kingfisher, who lead the Kukatja people to their lands in the Dreaming; Fred Tjakamarra shows trees and spears associated with his country around Lake Hazlett just as Tjumbo Tjapanangka paints Wilkinkarra or Lake MacKay, and Joan Nagomara, working in the style of the early days of Balgo's emergence, shows us ritual activities such as hair cutting, that tie her to her country.

Kathleen Paddoon's dramatic red and white minimalism arises from her hills and the associated Seven Sisters Tjukurrpa; Lucy Loomoo vividly, and Elizabeth Nyumi more subtly, convey living water sources and the bush tucker which flourishes around them; Ningie Nangala maps her country, dominated by major rockholes, in linear fashion; Brandy Tjungurrayi offers a riotously coloured set of geometries that refer to seeds, soakwaters and important Dreaming figures ... all reflect Balgo's cultural diversity and the desires and preoccupations of each artist.

Though many of the artists above are senior, and are considered 'master' artists in Australia, in the egalitarian sprit with which Warlayirti Artists operates today, the next generation of artists is now being promoted by the art centre and is rapidly gaining recognition. Pauline Sunfly (who paints Wilkinkarra in astonishing colour combinations), Miriam Baadjo (presenting the important Two Children Dreaming), and Jimmy Tchooga (who brings us his father's creation story) are forging their own direction.

In an expansion of their art practices, many artists at Balgo today are working in even more novel ways such as fused and kiln-formed glass. Most strikingly, several have worked closely with the innovative art publishers at Charles Darwin

University's Northern Editions, to create breath-taking suites of prints that continue to authentically express Kutjungka voices through art.

Living today at Balgo (Wirrimanu), at such a distance from their traditional lands, it is critical for each artist to recall the physical and spiritual aspects of their country through art production. And while such activities may be critical to the continuance of their own culture in all its richness and diversity, they are also critical to non-Indigenous Australians, who need to engage with that culture, country and its history in order to reach a deep understanding with its custodians.

In the act of painting, a dialogue between Aboriginal culture and non-Aboriginal culture has opened up. Today in Australia, pieces by Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists not only hang alongside each other in galleries, they inform each other, speak to each other, and begin to dismantle old boundaries. The artists from Balgo have given the world a unique pictorial language. That language is changing what we all know about Aboriginal people, their culture and spirituality, at the same time that it expands our shared understanding of the broader practice of contemporary art. Balgo art is a manifestation of survival and of cultural renewal – both for the Kutjungka peoples of the Western Desert, and for the rest of us who share with them a belief in the capacity of contemporary art to revitalize, in the deepest possible sense, the world.

Jackie Dunn
Senior Curator, Artbank



Jimmy Tchooga
(born c. 1951, Tjaru)
Tjukukalyu, 2008
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 75 cm

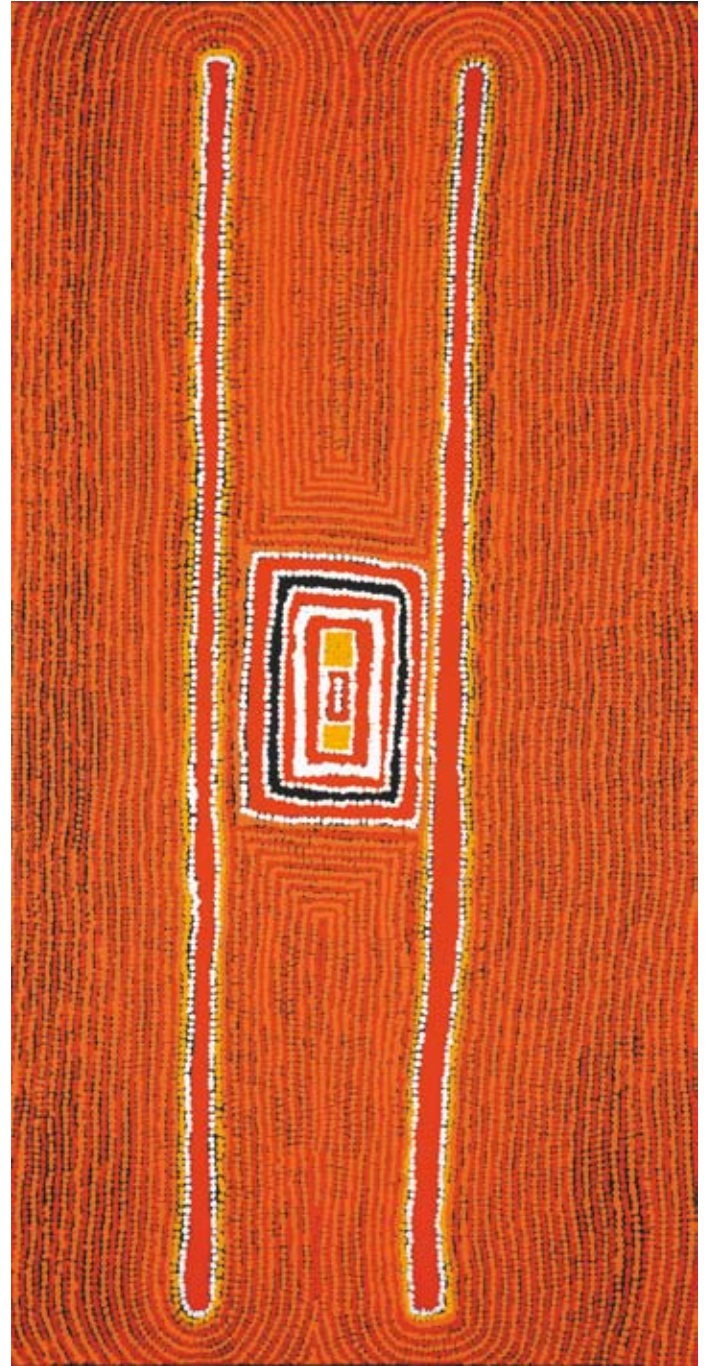
This painting depicts the creation story of Jimmy Tchooga's father. This story is set in Tchooga's traditional country of Tjukukalyu, east of Balgo in the Tanami Desert. The central circle represents *tjurnu* (soakwater) and the surrounding patterns, the sandhills. The long red lines depict sacred spears used in ceremony.

Far left
Pauline Sunfly
(born 1957, Kukatja)
Wilinkarra, 2007
Acrylic on linen, 150 x 76 cm

Pauline Sunfly's father, Sunfly Tjampitjin, was a senior custodian for a section of country called Liltjin, found south of Balgo near the salt lake of Wilinkarra (Lake MacKay). The lines in the painting are the dry creek beds which, during the wet season, flow into the lake.

Left
Susie Bootja Bootja
(1932–1993, Kukatja)
Kaningarra, near the Canning Stock Route, 2000
Acrylic on linen, 76 x 150 cm

The four dome-like forms of this painting suggest a rocky cave close to where Susie Bootja Bootja was born in the bush. Her mother is resting in the cave, enjoying a break while collecting bush tucker. The extensive dot work portrays *tjundar* (bush onions) while the black shapes are *tjirrilpartja* (bush carrots).





Lucy Yukenbarri
(c. 1934–2003, Kukatja)
Witjinti Soak in the Great Sandy Desert, 1998
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 80 cm

Lucy Yukenbarri depicts the country where she lived a nomadic lifestyle with her family before moving to Balgo mission. In the centre is a rockhole which is an important source of water for the surrounding area. Large sand dunes (*tali*) dominate the landscape, and there is an abundance of bush food.



Ningie Nanala Nangala
(born c. 1935, Kukatja)
Inyaroo, 2001
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 80 cm

Inyaroo is the name of a series of *tjurru*, or soakwaters. One, seen among the sand dunes, is known as *inta*, or living water, and never dries out. This is the country where Ningie Nangala lived and hunted with her family; good for collecting *pura*, or bush tomato and *kantilli*, or bush raisin.



Bob Dingle Tjapanangka
(born 1935, Kukatja/Walpiri)
Wilinkarra, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 80 cm

This painting shows some of the features of Bob Dingle Tjapanangka's father's country, in the Great Sandy Desert around Wilinkarra (Lake MacKay). The dynamic central line is a large and distinctive *tali*, along which are found a series of small *tjurru*, or soakwaters. The two larger opposing circles are *warran*, or claypans, nearby.



Eubena Nampitjin (born 1921, Kukatja/Wangkajungka)
Muyajilba, 2000
Acrylic on linen, 90 x 60 cm

This painting is of Eubena Nampitjin's country, which lies east of the middle section of the Canning Stock Route. It is known as Muyajilba after the waterhole featured in the painting's centre. It is in this country that the artist spent her youth, travelling and hunting with her family.



Joan Nagomara
(born 1953, Kukatja)
Tjunipa, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 60 cm

This painting depicts part of a Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) story for country south of Balgo known as Lambunbunda. In this Tjukurrpa the men made piles of stones while the women cut their hair. They used this hair to weave small skirts known as *ninbara*.

Miriam Baadjo
(born 1963, Kukatja)
Tjitji Kutjarra, 2008
Acrylic on linen, 150 x 100 cm

Miriam Baadjo has painted her uncle's country. It involves a story about Tjitji Kutjarra (Two Children) who are believed to have camped here. There is an area nearby for women only which is believed to have been formed by women's tears. *Mapam* (healing powers) are contained in some rocks found here.





Kathleen Paddoon
(born 1938, Ngardi)
Nakarra Nakarra, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Kathleen Paddoon
(born 1938, Ngardi)
Nakarra Nakarra, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Ningie Nanala Nangala
(born c. 1935, Kukatja)
Walu, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



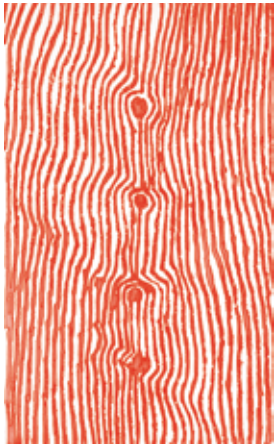
Eubena Nampitjin
(born 1921, Kukatja)
Kinyu, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Eubena Nampitjin
(born 1921, Kukatja)
Midjul, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



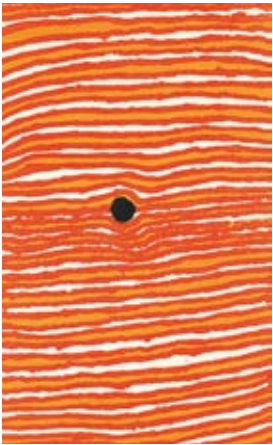
Elizabeth Nyumi
(born 1947, Pintupi)
Parwalla, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



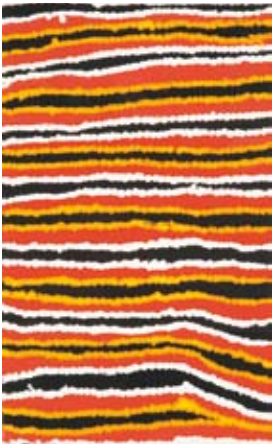
Brandy Tjungurrayi
(born c. 1930, Pintupi)
Pinti, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Tjumpo Tjapanangka
(1929–2007, Kukatja/Pintupi)
Wilkinkarra, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Helicopter Tjungurrayi
(born c. 1947, Kukatja)
Wangkartu, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm



Fred Tjakamarra
(1926–2006, Kukatja)
Lappi Lappi, 2005
Etching on paper, 64 x 39 cm

Elizabeth Nyumi
(born 1947, Pintupi)
Parwalla, 2000
Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 80 cm

This painting is of country known as Parwalla located far to the south of Balgo. Most of the painting shows *tali*, or sand dunes, and different bush foods including *kantilli* or bush raisin and *minyali* (seed). Women are shown as U shapes, with their *wanna* (digging sticks) and *coolamons* (wooden carrying dishes).

Left
The Warlayirti Suite
This suite of ten etchings was produced by respected publisher Northern Editions, based at Charles Darwin University, working closely with Warlayirti Artists.

Artists are: Eubena Nampitjin (who presents areas of country Kinyu, named after the spirit dog, and Midjul named for a key soakwater); Elizabeth Nyumi (whose country Parwalla fills with water after the wet season and produces an abundance of bush foods); Helicopter Tjungurrayi (whose country Wangkartu is named after the soakwater in the centre of the print); Tjumpo Tjapanangka (depicting country near the vast salt lake named Wilkinkarra or Lake MacKay); Kathleen Paddoon (whose Nakarra Nakarra is the site of the Seven Sisters Dreaming); Fred Tjakamarra (whose Lappi Lappi country is dominated by sandhill lines which also represent hunting spears); Ningie Nangala (who has depicted her country Walu, named after the rockhole seen in the centre), and Brandy Tjungurrayi (who tells the story of Pinti, a bird and an important figure who lead the sacred Tingari men during the Dreaming).



Below
Lucy Loomoo
 (born c. 1935, Kukatja/Pintupi)
Nyaru, 2001
 Acrylic on canvas, 100 x 150 cm

Lucy Loomoo has painted *Two Old Men Dreaming*, a Tjukurrpa story for a site in her country. The two men are distinguished in the landscape as two important rockholes. In the Tjukurrpa the two men urinated here and the site turned to little white stones, seen either side of the two white waterholes.



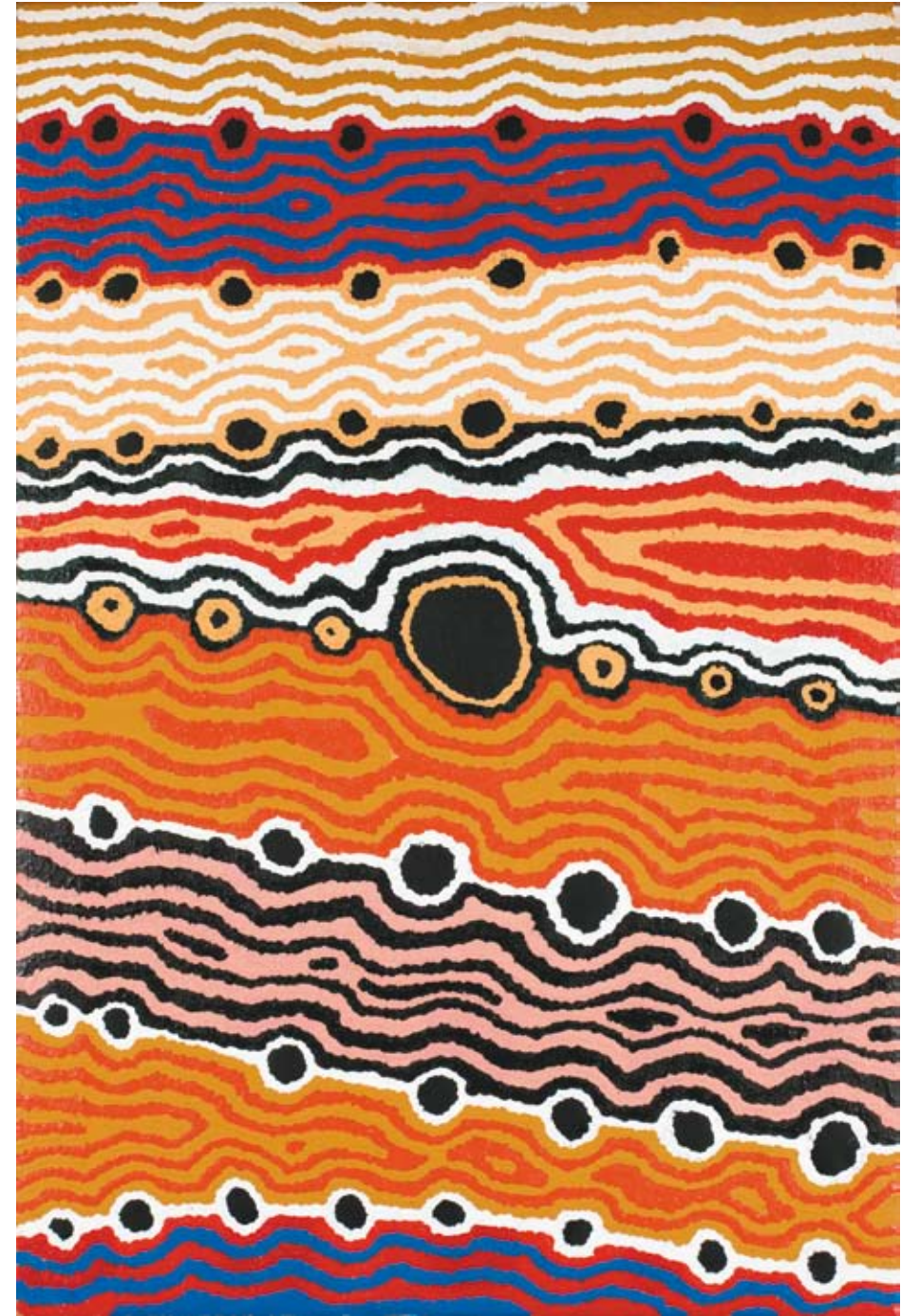
Boxer Milner
 (born 1935, Tjaru/Walmajarri)
Windirr, 2000
 Acrylic on linen, 150 x 76 cm

Boxer Milner's country along the shores of Sturt Creek is known as Windirr. The lower half of the painting shows the tributaries, and the top half shows billabongs along the banks. The waters have turned white, known as 'milkwater', which occurs after heavy rains in the upper clay reaches of the creek.



Helicopter Tjungurrayi
 (born c.1947, Kukatja)
Warrwiya Soak,
Near Jupiter Well, 1998
 Acrylic on linen, 120 x 80 cm

This country belongs to the artist. He has depicted a large soakage called Warrwiya which has good reliable water. Helicopter Tjungurrayi describes the surrounding landscape as 'sandhill country'. Small black circles represent *walku* (bush apple) trees which are prolific in the area.



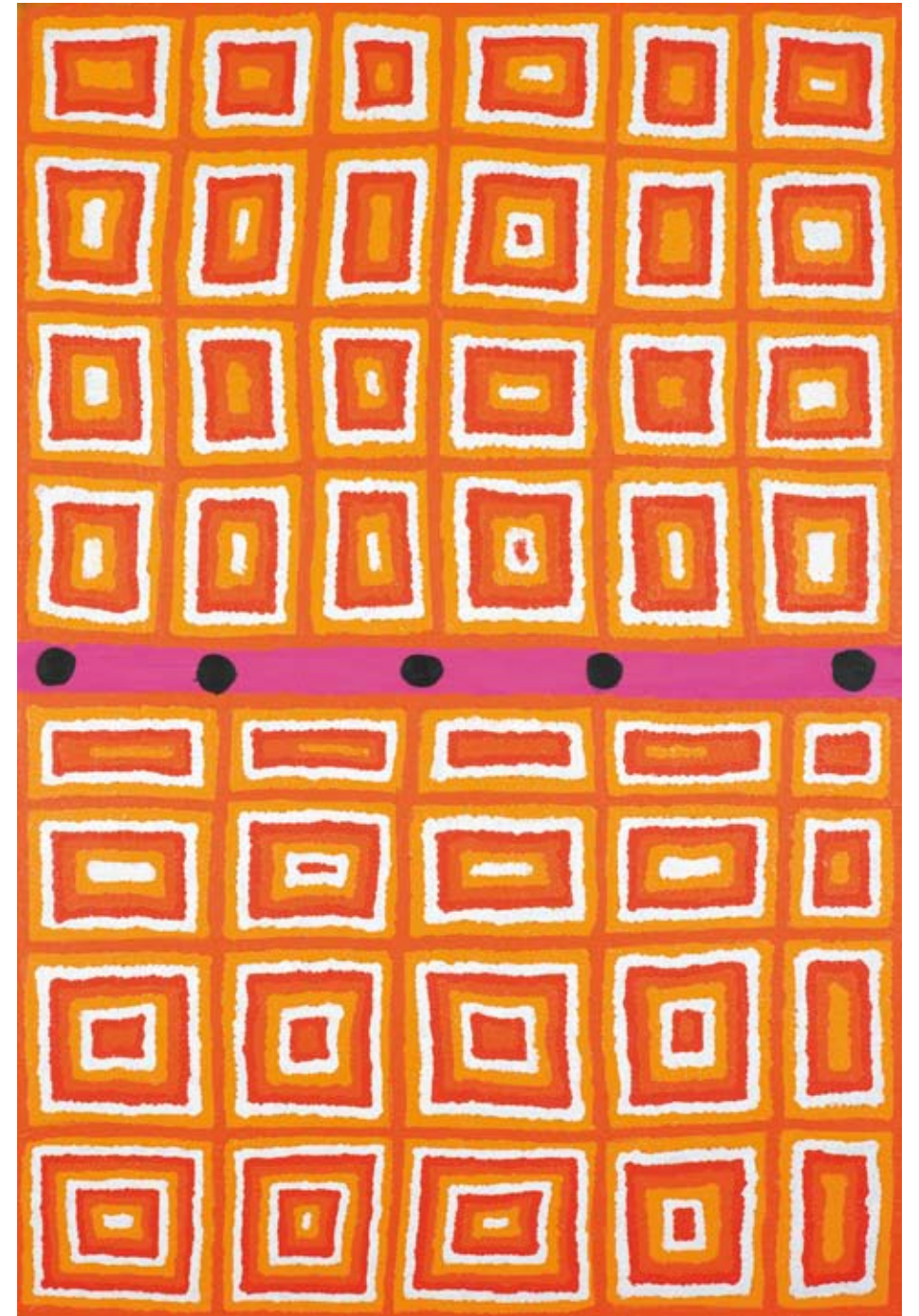


Kathleen Paddoon
(born 1938, Ngardi)
Nakarra Nakarra, 2007
Acrylic on Belgian linen, 120 x 80 cm

Nakarra Nakarra is the site of the Seven Sisters Dreaming, a story about sisters who travelled this country, running from an old man who wanted to marry the youngest. Today at Nakarra Nakarra, a group of hills (here in red) embodies the sisters, surrounded by *tali* (sand dunes) in white.

Brandy Tjungurrayi
(born c. 1930, Pintupi)
Narloo, 2002
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 80 cm

Brandy Tjungurrayi has painted his traditional country, called Narloo. The squares represent a particular type of bush seed collected here, known as *kulparri*. These black seeds are ground up to make damper (bush bread). Through the middle of the painting a number of soakwaters have been depicted.



‘We write the story down in English, about the country [the painting relates to, but] only little bit of the story, not too much. The sacred bits we keep secret.’

Jimmy Tchooga



John Lee Tjakamarra
(born 1956, Kukatja/Ngardi)
Luurnpa, 1999
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 76 cm

This painting shows Luurnpa, the Kingfisher who is a Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) ancestor, and some of the associated landscape features near Balgo. Along the lower edge are *parmarr*, or hills, between which are *tjurrmu*, or soakwaters. The shapes in the centre are two creeks that drain to the north and south of Balgo.

BALGO: Contemporary Australian Art from the Balgo Hills is a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade touring exhibition produced in partnership with Artbank (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts).

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Artbank wish to acknowledge the valuable support and assistance of Warlayirti Artists Art Centre in the Balgo Hills, in particular Sally Clifford and Annette Cock, and the artists: Kathleen Paddoon; Eubena Nampitjin; Brandy Tjungurrayi; Ningie Nanala Nangala; Helicopter Tjungurrayi; Elizabeth Nyumi; Tjumbo Tjapanangka; John Lee Tjakamarra; Fred Tjakamarra; Lucy Loomoo; Susie Bootja Bootja; Boxer Milner; Bob Dingle Tjapanangka; Lucy Yukenbarri; Pauline Sunfly; Jimmy Tchooga; Joan Nagomara and Miriam Baadjo.

Similar paintings and prints by the artists can be viewed and purchased on-line at:

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ISBN 978-0-646-50387-5