

# Dorothy Djukulul

Australian, born 1942

Ganalbingu, Ramingining

## Honey Spirit Story

c. 1994

Ochre on bark

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Dorothy Djukulul was born at Murrwangi, near the Arafuna Swamp in Arnhem Land, and her family is the Ganalbingu clan. Her father, the esteemed artist Dick Ngulmarmar, taught Djukulul how to paint, passing down his stories to her to keep them alive. He had to receive special permission to do so from community Elders, since the tales were subjects that men traditionally depicted. She is among the first female artists in Arnhem to achieve international success. In 1991, she won a prestigious commission from John Kluge, whose Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection is now at the University of Virginia.

The fine cross-hatching that appears on this bark painting is known as Rarrk, which is distinctive to the Yolgnu people in Arnhem (*Yolgnu* is a general term for “people”). Arnhem is known for its dense forests and lush vegetation, the setting for many Yolgnu creation stories. The Honey Spirits, for example, moved through and animated the woods while looking for honey. They named the various animal, bird, insect, and plant species they encountered on their journeys. The artist describes her subject as follows:

At the beginning of time, a Honey Spirit in the form of a man known by many names (Udal, Wudal, Mere, and Mewal) came from the east. Near Blue Mud Bay, Wudal cut down a big tree to get the honey inside. As the tree fell, it made a big depression in the Earth, which became a river.

## Gunybi Ganambarr

Australian, born 1973  
Naymil, Yirrkala

## Wurran Ga Baypinga

2011

Ochres on wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Gunybi Ganambarr is a law man and ceremonial leader, in addition to being a highly respected artist throughout Arnhem Land and Australia. He employs diverse methods in his sculptural practice, such as incisions, deep chiseling, molding, painting, and sculpting in the round with wood. He is married to the daughter of ceremonial leader and exhibition artist Djambawa Marawili, who has influenced his work.

Ganambarr has become known for incorporating reclaimed industrial materials into his sculptures. He justified this use to Yolgnu Elders because these metallic scraps have become part of the landscape, like bark, wood, and natural pigments. His innovative practice revolutionized sculpture making in eastern Arnhem Land. This example, however, demonstrates more traditional methods and was expertly carved from eucalyptus bark. It shows a Wurran (cormorant) catching a Baypinga (freshwater fish), which dangles from the bird’s claws. The figurative subject almost disappears behind the intricate decorative patterning.

# Lily Hargraves Nungarrayi

Australian, 1930–2018

Warlpiri, Lajamanu

## Ngalyipi (Snake Vine Dreaming)

1997

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Lily Hargraves Nungarrayi was born near Jilla (Chilla Well) in the Tanami Desert. Known as Glurpunta (“fighting spirit”), she was a highly respected Elder of her community and senior law woman who loved to paint. She moved to Lajamanu around 1950 with about a thousand other people, who were trucked from Yuendumu due to a lack of housing. She stayed in Lajamanu until her death, becoming renowned for her expressive, colorful style. She painted for the Warnayaka Art Centre, where she also passed along her Dreaming stories and taught younger girls the dance and songlines associated with important women’s ceremonies.

The long undulating lines in this painting represent the Ngalyipi (snake vine), which grows up the trunks and limbs of Kurrkara trees (desert oaks). Snake vines are sacred to Warlpiri women and can be used for ceremonial wraps, straps to carry wooden bowls filled with food, or tourniquets for headaches.

# Naata Nungurrayi

Australian, 1930–2021

Pintupi, Kintore

## Piti Kujurra

2005

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Naata Nungurrayi arrived in Papunya in 1962, after severe droughts in her homeland, staying until the late 1970s. While at Papunya, she witnessed the beginning of the Central and Western Desert painting movement and learned many of the techniques and representational protocols by assisting the men as they worked. She returned to Papunya in 1994, when women began painting as part of a program and established her career as an independent artist, eventually joining Papunya Tula Artists in 1996. After that she participated in many important museum exhibitions, including *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* (2000) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, and won a commendation in 2002 at the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. She was a well-respected Elder of her community in Kintore.

Piti Kujurra (or Piti Kutjarra) is a sacred water soakage site that many ancestral Pintupi women visited during their journeys around the rock holes of the Kiwirrkurra region. It appears in the painting as the central nucleus, with radiating lines inside. The small circular forms surrounding it are the bush berries that were gathered and prepared at the site.

## Kathleen Petyarre

Australian, c. 1930–2018  
Anmatyerre, Utopia

## My Place Atnangkere

1996

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Kwementyaye Petyarre, known as Kathleen later in life, is one of the most successful painters from Utopia, along with her sister Gloria Tamerre Petyarre and her aunt Emily Kame Kngwarreye. She was one of seven sisters, several of whom became reputable practitioners associated with Utopia Station. She took up the medium in 1986, abandoning the batik practice she had learned in the 1970s, which aggravated her asthma. Among her many accomplishments, she won the prestigious Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award in 1996 and the People's Choice Award at the Seppelt Contemporary Art Awards in 1998. In 2001, she received a solo retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (accompanied by a monograph).

Petyarre's primary subject is the Dreaming of the Arnkerrth Ancestor, related to the thorny devil mountain lizard (*Moloch horridus*) that resides in her birthplace of Atnangkere, feeds off ants, and can grow up to eight inches long. The creation story was passed down to her from her paternal grandmother and relates to the travels of Arnkerrth, who changes color as she moves to blend in with the surrounding environment, like her reptilian descendant. The brilliant orange of the painting recalls the red-orange sand of the Central Desert region, and the lines sketch out the movement of her ancestor. Painted from an aerial perspective, the exquisite detail of the work shifts between microscopic and macroscopic views of Petyarre's homeland.

## Dorrie Jones Petyarre

Australian, born 1969

Alyawarre, Utopia

## **Minyma Kutjara (Two Sisters Dreaming)**

1996

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

While Dorrie Jones Petyarre shares the same surname, or skin name, as the more well-known Petyarre sisters Kathleen and Gloria (whose works are shown nearby), they are not related. Dorrie is the daughter of Lenny Jones Kngwarreye and Topsy Pwerle Lewis, both artists. She began painting for Mbantua Gallery in Alice Springs in the early 2000s. She depicts subjects that relate to women's ceremonies, bush medicine leaves, and the Two Sisters Dreaming, shown here—an important creation story from the western and southern deserts of Australia. It describes an epic story of two sisters who traveled across the land while the elder sibling taught the younger one sacred Inma (storytelling, song, and dance). Their ceremonies created sacred landmarks, consisting of caves, rock holes, and mountain ranges. In this painting, four U-shapes denote people gathered in a cave called Entibera, delineated by the rectangular shape, in which the women took shelter during a thunderstorm. The long dotted line is the path the women made as they danced.

## **Shorty Jangala Robertson**

Australian, c. 1925–2014

Warlpiri, Yuendumu

## Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming)

2003

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Shorty Jangala Robertson was born in the bush near Jilla (Chilla Well) and lived a nomadic life with his family as a young boy. He recounts the brutality of the “whitefella” in relation to the 1928 Coniston Massacre and remembers being shot at in his homeland and fleeing for Mount Theo, about 110 miles north of Yuendumu in the Tanami Desert. He settled in Yuendumu in 1967. Robertson didn’t start painting until he was in his seventies, becoming part of the Warlukurlangu Artists association.

Here he painted one of his ancestral creation stories, the Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming), which transpires at Pirlinyarnu, about 40 miles west of Yuendumu. David Wroth describes this Dreaming story as follows:

It relates how two Jangala men, rainmakers, sang the rain, unleashing a giant storm that collided with another storm from Warpurtali. The two storms travelled across the country from Karlipinpa near Kintore. A Kirrkarlanji (brown falcon) carried the storm further west, until it dropped it at Pirlinyarnu forming an enormous maliri (lake). Whenever it rains, hundreds of Ngapangarlpa (bush ducks) still flock to Pirlinyarnu. A mulju (soakage) exists in this place today. At Shorty Jangala Robertson’s birthplace, the falcon dug up a warnayarra (rainbow serpent). The serpent carried water with it to create another large lake.

## Darby Jampijinpa Ross

Australian, c. 1910–2005

Warlpiri, Yuendumu

## Yankirri Jukurrpa (Emu Dreaming)

1993

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Darby Jampijinpa Ross was born near Ngarliyikirlangu in the bush, north of Yuendumu, and led a traditional nomadic life when he was young. He worked as a stockman when cattle stations were developed in his homeland by white settlers, and survived the brutal Coniston Massacre of 1928, when over sixty First Nations men, women, and children were killed near Coniston Cattle Station in the last documented massacre of Indigenous people in Australia. Ross was also a Warlpiri Elder and a founding member of the Warlukurlangu Artists association in Yuendumu, where he began to paint in 1985.

The emu, a large flightless bird native to Australia, is one of the artist's totems (an animal or object of spiritual significance that is adopted by someone as an emblem), along with the bandicoot (a mouse-like marsupial with a pointed snout). The blue, T-shaped forms in the painting represent the tracks of the emu. The five roundels resemble mandalas and designate significant places that the emu circumnavigated, possibly water holes or sources of food. The Emu Dreaming is also an ancestral songline—a generational story embodied in the land that is passed down through song—that relates to the Southern Cross constellation in the Milky Way.

## Jackie Tjakamarra

Australian, 1935–1993

Pintupi, Papunya



# Tingari Cycle

1991

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

The Tingari cycle is one of the most important Dreaming stories of the Pintupi people, whose traditional lands stretch from Papunya all the way to the west in the Kimberley, covering vast territories. The Aboriginal scholar Wally Caruana describes the Tingari as “a group of ancestral beings, with one or more dominant men or women, who brought law and culture to the peoples of the Western Desert region. They travel across the land, and, through events which occur at a particular location, provide the place with spiritual connotations.” The concentric circles that cover the surface of this painting by Jackie Tjakamarra designate the significant ceremonial sites created by the ancestral beings along the Tingari path. The specifics of the Tingari cycle are safely guarded by the custodians of the stories.

## Paddy Fordham Wainburranga

Australian, c. 1932–2006

Rembarrnga, Wugularr (Beswick)/Maningrida

(left)

# Balangalngalan

1991

Painted wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

(right)

# Balangalngalan

1991

Painted wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Stories associated with Balangalngalan (or Balanjanaglalan) were one of Paddy Fordham Wainburranga’s favorite subjects to depict in both painting and sculpture. Art Leven (formerly Cooee Art) describes the ancestral figures as follows:

These ambiguous beings are responsible for seeing that things in the human world go in accordance with the will of the Spirits. They are said to be half-human, half-spirit, with the power to transform at will. They are wise and provide guidance and healing, often appearing in the form of animals or birds, but generally living as humans, and sometimes taking the role of a witch doctor. However, they have been known at times to abduct unattended babies or straying children as a means of recruiting new members and can become quite strict when customs are not faithfully observed. So, like all other-worldly powers, they have a frightening aspect and must be heeded with great respect. They are spirits that are woven into the kinship system as inextricable links in a holistic cosmology.

# Polly Napangardi Watson

Australian, born c. 1932

Warlpiri, Yuendumu

## Wataki (Bush Orange Dreaming)

1996

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Polly Napangardi Watson's painting career began in 1987, and she quickly became known for her unique pointillist style that evokes the dense starry nights of desert skies. This work relates to the Wataki (*Capparis mitchellii*), commonly referred to as wild desert orange or native pomegranate. The palette Watson employed suggests the colors of the fruit at various stages: green when young, and orange and purple when ripe. These cherished small fruits grow on a large, hardy shrub in summer and have a white spindly flower that resembles stars and only lasts for a day. The tangy, nutrient-rich fruit is an important food source for the Warlpiri people. Watson depicted them from an aerial perspective of the landscape surrounding Mount Doreen, a prominent rock formation west of Yuendumu in the Tanami Desert. The vibrant dots symbolize the flora of the region in full bloom.

# John Bulunbulun

Australian, 1946–2010  
Ganalbingu, Maningrida

## Lorrkon (Hollow Log)

1996

Ochres on stringybark log

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

John Bulunbulun—a member of the Ganalbingu clan—lived in Wurdeja near the Blyth River in Arnhem Land. His traditional homeland was the Arafura Swamp area, thirty miles to the east.

Bulunbulun was taught to paint by his father and began creating artworks in the 1970s. Momentously, he won an intellectual property case against a Queensland T-shirt company that used one of his paintings without permission, which became a landmark case for First Nations people. Bulunbulun’s work typically portrays the story of the Guwaynang (long-necked freshwater turtle), as the artist asserts: “These paintings are my Dreaming, and all the animals here are part of my Dreaming. There is the long-neck turtle....He is the most important one because it was him who made my country and my people.”

Here the turtle appears on a Lorrkon (hollow log), a ceremonial object developed in Arnhem as a sacred coffin that contained a deceased person’s bones. It was buried in the ground after being decorated with the clan designs, accompanied by related songs and dance. The log—made from stringybark, or eucalyptus—is naturally hollowed out by termites and then carved. The one shown here, however, was Intentionally Id as an artwork and sold commercially, which has become a practice in Arnhem.

# Tiger Palpatja

Australian, c. 1920–2012

Pitjantjatjara, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara  
Lands (APY Lands)

## Wanampi Jukurrpa

2011

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

In his early years, Tiger Palpatja lived a traditional nomadic existence in his homeland near the sacred rock hole of Piltati, in the northwestern part of South Australia. When he was a young man, he and his family were relocated to the Presbyterian mission of Ernabella (now the Pukatja community), and there he worked as a sheep shearer and l’arne’ English. He moved to Amata with his relatives when the mission closed in the 1970s. He eventually became a healer for his community and a senior law man.

Palpatja didn’t begin painting until the age of eighty-five, but his work was immediately recognized and is now in the collections of many museums in Australia. Most of his depictions are of the Wanampi, an ancestral water snake from his birthplace. This Dreaming story, according to the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne (NGV), is as follows:

Embedded in the land is a story of an escalating conflict between wati kutjara (two brothers) and their wives, minyma kutjara (two sisters). Every day the women would go hunting while their husbands performed Inma (ceremonies). One day the wives decided to eat all the food they had gathered rather than share it and in a fit of rage, their husbands transformed themselves into wanampi (giant water serpents) and travelled beneath the ground. In search of the wanampi, the wives dug furiously into the ground, creating the rocky gorge at Piltati.

## Gloria Tamerre Petyarre

Australian, 1938–2021  
Anmatyerre, Utopia

## Bush Medicine Story

1998

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Gloria Tamerre Petyarre was born at Mosquito Bore in the Utopia area, northeast of Alice Springs. The Anmatyerre and Alyawarre people received land title in 1979, earlier than many others, and this enabled them to return to traditional practices of living on the land and helped to foster the conditions for them to flourish as painters. Petyarre first began working in batik in the late 1970s, learning from her aunt Emily Kame Kngwarreye, and was a founding member of the Utopia Women’s Batik Group. She began painting on canvas in the late 1980s and participated in many important early museum exhibitions that featured the work of Utopia women. She was the first Indigenous artist in Australia to win the prestigious Wynne Prize of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. She is the younger sister of Kathleen Petyarre, whose work is nearby, and her other sisters—Ada, Jean, Myrtle, Nancy, and Violet—are also renowned artists.

Petyarre is known for her diverse styles and mastery of color. Her abstract compositions relate to ceremonial markings, Dreaming stories, sacred features of the land, and places where food is gathered. In this painting, she portrayed patterns of swirling medicinal leaves of the Kurrajong tree—each individually applied in one brushstroke in different colors—from her Country of Anmatyerre. Her works instill in the viewer the sense of wonder and community she experienced as she sat beneath the tree for hours with other women learning about its healing properties while preparing seeds for cakes. Some of her largest depictions of leaves possess dense, rhythmic optical effects.

## Paddy Japaljarri Stewart

Australian, 1935–2013  
Warlpiri, Yuendumu

# Ngarlu Jukurrpa (Love Dreaming)

2002

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

In 1984, Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, a renowned Warlpiri artist, painted twenty of the thirty doors at the Yuendumu school with Dreaming imagery from Warlpiri and Anmatyerre lands so that younger generations would learn their cultural origin stories. He was also among the six Yuendumu artists who were invited to participate in the historic exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1989. This painting represents the Ngarlu Jukurrpa (Love Dreaming), whose Kirdu (owners) are Japaljarri and Jungarrayi men and Napaljarri and Nungarrayi women. Here is an edited version of the story about forbidden love, as told by Warlukurlangu Artists in Yuendumu:

The story of the Ngarlu Jukurrpa (love Dreaming) is about a man with the skin name of Jungarrayi, called Lintipilinti. He lived at Ngarlu, which means “red rock,” a country to the east of Yuendumu. Lintipilinti fell in love with a woman with the skin name of Napangardi, a forbidden relationship under Warlpiri law, as the woman was his classificatory mother-in-law.

Aroused by her beauty, he went to Ngarlu and made a hair-string belt for her, singing as he worked. The Napangardi woman could not sleep and began to feel sick. She realized that someone was singing Yilpinji (love songs) for her. A little bird visited the woman every day, taking Lintipilinti’s love songs to her. The force of the love songs pulled her to him. When the two met, they made love, but they were turned to stone, because their relationship was taboo according to Warlpiri religious law. The two can still be seen, as two rocks, at Ngarlu today.

During the course of these events, women from Ngarlu who gossiped about the forbidden union turned into Miinypa (native fuchsia), plants with small red flowers that have honey inside them that are delicious to eat, tasting like ice cream. Ngarlu is a sacred place where the flowers are still commonly found today.

# Maxie Tjampitjinpa

Australian, 1945–1997

Warlpiri, Papunya

## Watunuma (Flying Ant Dreaming)

1989

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Maxie Tjampitjinpa, born in Haasts Bluff, was a respected artist at Papunya, where he moved in the 1960s with his family. He began painting in the 1980s under the tutelage of Mick Namarai Tjapaltjarri, a senior member of Papunya Tula Artists. In 1984, Tjampitjinpa won the Northern Territory Art Award. He moved to the Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery as an artist in residence in 1988, which provided him with a spacious studio to pursue his work.

The Flying Ant Dreaming comes from Watunuma, his father's homeland. It was one of Tjampitjinpa's primary painting subjects. Here is the story, from the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney:

Watanuma (Flying Ants Dreaming) depicts the airborne travels of an elderly man, relating to the Flying Ant. He travelled from the far east through to Anmatyerre lands and then on to Warlpiri country. The man landed upon solid ground for the last time west of Yuendumu, 400 kms [about 250 miles] north west of Alice Springs. His land travels created creeks before [he retreated] to a cave as his final resting place.

The flying ant is the winged stage of the termite, commonly viewed as a destructive force. However, Watanuma (Flying Ants Dreaming) acknowledges the important role the insects play in the ecology of country.

## Adam Gibbs Tjapaltjarri

Australian, born 1958



Pintupi, Papunya/Kintore

## Honey Ant Dreaming

2001

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Adam Gibbs Tjapaltjarri was born in Papunya but taken from his parents at a young age and moved to Alice Springs. He was among the Stolen Generations, which refers to the large quantity of First Nations children who were forcibly removed from their families from 1905 and into the 1970s and relocated by Australian government agencies and church missions. Tjapaltjarri returned to Papunya in 1980, reuniting with his parents, and together they moved to Kintore in 1981. His father was Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi, one of the founding members of Papunya Tula Artists. Tjapaltjarri started painting for the collective in 1991.

In this work, Tjapaltjarri portrays a scene from the Honey Ant Dreaming (Yunkaranyi or Yurrampi Jukurrpa), the ancestral story that initiated the Central and Western Desert painting movement when male Elders depicted it on the walls of the school at Papunya. This tale is a significant source of knowledge for the Pintupi, Warlpiri, and Anmatyerre people in the Central Desert region. The edible honey ants contain a sweet substance in their abdomens and are considered a delicacy. The insects are also a vital part of the ecology, because they dig deep into the ground, creating vast networks of tunnels and small chambers in which they suspend themselves. For millennia, Aboriginal Australians have passed down the knowledge that honey ants play an integral role in the creation of sacred soakage sites. They are also revered as ancestral beings. The small hills surrounding Papunya are believed to be the petrified bodies of honey ant ancestors.

## George Ward Tjungurrayi

Australian, c. 1945–2023

Pintupi, Kiwirrkurra/Papunya/Kintore

## Tingari Men at Kaakuratintja (Lake Macdonald)

2005

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

George Ward Tjungurrayi was born near Kiwirrkurra and Wilkinkarra (or Lake Mackay), the largest salt lake in Western Australia, covering 1,349 square miles. He arrived in Papunya in the early 1960s and started painting in the late 1970s, not joining Papunya Tula Artists until 1984. His older brothers, Yala Yala Gibbs and Willy Tjungurrayi, were prominent makers at Papunya. It wasn't until after the death of Yala Yala in 1998 that Tjungurrayi began painting in earnest, feeling the responsibility to continue the tradition. In 2004 he won the prestigious Wynne Prize from the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, which recognized the distinctive opticality of his work.

Tjungurrayi depicted his Country, populated by many salt lakes, and the Dreaming stories of the Tingari cycle—sacred ancestral tales about male initiation rites centered around the lakes of his homelands and a vast network of ancestral songlines. This painting relates to the Tingari men's activities around Kaakuratintja (Lake Macdonald), a snake-rich region south of Wilkinkarra. This area, unknown to Europeans until 1889, was inhabited by Indigenous Australians for tens of thousands of years.

Tjungurrayi's paintings dazzle with intense optical patterns created by the fine lines that undulate around his compositions. The pulsing design relates to the Mungilypa shrub (*Tecticornia verrucosa*), a type of salt-tolerant succulent that produces edible seeds. Similar motifs are also engraved on sacred stone tablets known as Churinga (or Tjurunga) and incised into wooden artifacts and ceremonial objects.

## Paddy Fordham Wainburranga

Australian, c. 1932–2006

Rembarrnga, Wugularr (Beswick)/Maningrida

## Manjhkikilyo (Malevolent Mimi Spirit)

1994

Painted wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Paddy Fordham Wainburranga was a respected Rembarrnga artist from Central Arnhem who specialized in many different mediums: painting, sculpture, prints, bark, dance, and storytelling. He lived in the bush before moving to Maranboy, where he first saw white people at the age of eleven. As a young adult, he worked as a stockman and was given the name Fordham by the station owners. In the 1960s he moved to Maningrida and painted for the arts center there in the 1970s. He became known for his historical works that blended European and First Nations iconography. Notably, he made 23 of the 200 Lorrkon (hollow log coffins) for the *Aboriginal Memorial* at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra—which honors Indigenous lives lost since European colonization—for the bicentennial celebrations in 1988. He features in the short film *Too Many Captain Cooks* (1989), painting, telling the stories of his homeland, and playing the didgeridoo. In 1993, he won the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award.

Wainburranga portrayed many themes of the Rembarrnga people, which his father had passed down to him, such as the Rainbow Serpent, mosquitoes, turtles, and Mimih spirits, as shown here. Depictions of these beings were found in cave paintings in Arnhem Land that date back thirty to fifty thousand years. They are believed to be ancestors who taught people how to paint, hunt, and use fire. Their long slender bodies enabled them to hide in rock crevices during the day and come out at night. As tricksters, they adopted different attributes—the one pictured here wields an axe in one hand and a goose wing fan in the other. He is a bad spirit, because he had a habit of eating people. Mimihs were also known to keep pet pythons, as represented here, who would slither over their bodies as they slept.

## Samson Japaljarri Martin

Australian, born 1936  
Warlpiri, Yuendumu

## Andrea Nungarrayi Martin

Australian, born 1965  
Warlpiri, Yuendumu

## Kanyarla Jukurrpa (Rock Wallaby Dreaming)

1996

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,

gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

This painting is a collaboration between a father, Samson Japaljarri Martin, and his daughter, Andrea Nungarrayi Martin. Samson was an Elder of the Warlpiri community and one of the founding members of the Warlukurlangu Artists association in 1985. Andrea also became an important member of the art center, working there for twenty years in a leadership role.

Samson passed his Jukurrpa (Dreaming stories) down to Andrea, who still paints them today. One of them is the Rock Wallaby Dreaming, which describes a Jungarrayi/Japaljarri father and son who set off on a wallaby hunting trip. When they reached Kiriungu, a creek with a soakage site, they fell asleep around a fire, empty-handed and very hungry—represented at the top of the canvas between two black arcs. The wallaby tracks, the double arrow-like forms accompanying the human footprints, circumnavigate the painting and suggest that the wallaby traveled between the two sites with the men. When the men awoke, they realized that the sacred wallaby had tricked them, guiding them back to their starting point, shown at the bottom of the work. The two concentric circles, connected by long straight black lines, are the two sites in the story, which are surrounded by windbreaks, indicated by the longer curving black lines above and below the campsites.

# Eubena Nampitjin

Australian, 1921–2013

Kukatja, Balgo

(clockwise from top left)

## Kunawarritji

2000

## Kurra

2000

## Mardalba

2000

## Mardalba

2000

Acrylic on board

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Eubena Nampitjin was among the first and most well-known of the Balgo artists, establishing a signature vibrant style that later came to define Balgo art. She was born at Tjinjadpa, west of Jupiter Well, and was taught to be a healer by her mother. She moved to the Catholic mission in Balgo Hills (Wirrimanu) in 1962 with her family as a result of severe drought. When she was young, she worked with Father Anthony Rex Peile to compile the Kukatja dictionary.

For millenia, Indigenous Australians drew directly in the sand and applied paint to their bodies. Nampitjin's first artworks on canvas were made with a stick. She started using a brush in the late 1980s, and her pictures became highly sophisticated expressions of Dreaming stories. Significant themes for her were Kinyu (a spirit dog), Tjukurrpa (rock holes), Tjumu (water holes along the Canning Stock Route), and Marlu (kangaroo), among others. Nampitjin's works are in many leading museums in Australia, including the National Gallery in Canberra.

## Liddy Nakamarra Nelson

Australian, c. 1935–2007

Warlpiri, Lajamanu

## Yarla Jukurrpa (Bush Potato Dreaming)

2000

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Liddy Nakamarra Nelson lived at Lajamanu (also called Hooker Creek). Warlpiri people were taken there in 1946 and 1951, being dislocated from their Country near Yuendumu, which lies about 250 miles to the south. Eventually people settled at

Lajamanu, after many walked back to Yuendumu, rejecting their forced move away from their homelands. Painting began in Lajamanu in the 1980s and quickly caught on when classes were developed at the local education center.

Nelson’s works focus primarily on the Yarla (bush potato or yam, also known as rock morning glory), a small shrub with tubers and pink and white flowers. In one Yarla story, two old men, with the skin names Jakamarra and Jupurrula, “sat down and shook a sacred stone in Yamaparnta, a place near Yuendumu. The Yarla plant grew from the stone, and is believed to be the ancestor of all the plants now found in that place” (Smarthistory).

In this painting we see many different signs from the story. In the lower right-hand corner the sacred stone appears in green, surrounded by red circles that suggest the sacred food. Two humans, designated by the U-shapes, are also present with coolamons (marked by the ovals), which are typically water vessels but can also be used for food. The short straight lines, concentrated in the center, could be digging sticks used to excavate dirt to create the surrounding water holes.

## Craig Koomeeta

Australian, born 1977  
Wik-Alkan, Aurukun

## Saltwater Crocodile

2001

Ochres on resin

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

According to the artist, who is from the north coast in Aurukun, Queensland:

This is a carving of a male saltwater crocodile who ran off with a freshwater female from Kencherang Lagoon. Angered

by the elopement, a big freshwater male attacked the saltwater crocodile. They both bled and the saltwater bit the freshwater on the tail, so he's got a short tail. And the freshwater bit the saltwater on the snout, so his nose is shorter than his tail now. Saltwater family heard him cry, so they went up and found him bleeding, made a stretcher and took him back to the beach, and slept a couple of nights. Afterwards the saltwater family was singing songs.

## Djambawa Marawili

Australian, born 1953

Madarrpa, Yirrkala

### **Source of Fire**

2014

Ochres and sawdust on bark

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Djambawa Marawili is an acclaimed artist and cultural leader who uses his artwork to advance political progress relating to land rights in northeast Arnhem Land. His paintings helped to secure a protracted Native Title claim that began in 1963 (and ended in 1978) with the celebrated Yirrkala bark petitions—the first petitions in Australian history incorporating First Nations ways of representing relationships to land to garner recognition by the House of Representatives at Parliament House in Canberra. The artist’s Country, Baniyala (Yilpara), is the largest homeland supported by the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre in Yirrkala.

The undulating forms in this painting may refer to the lightning snakes in Marawili’s Country in northeast Arnhem Land, the attributes of which humans can adopt, as he illustrates in this quote:

There is fire in these waters of Blue Mud Bay. My language  
is the tongue of fire. With it, I  
can talk straight and with my mind and with  
my tongue burning I can destroy all falsehood.  
I can talk really strong and stand firm—not weakly bending.  
I can face any heavy thing without shaking. As I do.

**Ginger Riley**  
**Munduwalawala**  
Australian, c. 1936–2002  
Marra, Ngukurr

**Limmen Bight River  
during the Wet**



1995–96

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Ginger Riley Munduwalawala was born in the bush in southeast Arnhem Land, near the Limmen Bight River, in his mother's Country. He started painting in 1987, winning major awards after just several years, including the Alice Prize (1992) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Commission Art Award (1993). He was the first Aboriginal artist to have a major retrospective at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne (1997). His distinctive figurative style departs from the allover abstraction of the Central and Western Desert painting movement. This is because, he reasoned, "there was more to Indigenous contemporary art than Papunya Tula."

Munduwalawala's paintings feature the Dreaming stories of the Limmen Bight River area of Marra, for which he was granted Native Title in 2000. In this large-scale work, the sinuous line of the river stretches across the lush verdant lands, as rain clouds approach from the distance. The sea eagle Ngak Ngak—a guardian figure that protects the land and appears in many of the artist's canvases—is depicted twice, on either side of the river, assuming both white and green forms. The hills in the back are the Four Archers, which lie about thirty miles inland along the river and feature prominently in Munduwalawala's pieces in groups of three or four. In the middle ground, two traveling snakes glide toward the river; they could be Garimala, the Rainbow Serpent that sometimes appears in double and is associated with seasonal rains. Munduwalawala acknowledged that the rain clouds in his paintings represent his mother, and about the aerial perspective he employed, he said he paints as if "on a cloud, on top of the world, looking down...From the top I can see country right down to where I come from."

## Beerbee Mungnari

Australian, 1933–2011

Gija, Warmun

## Untitled (Purnululu)

Not dated

Ochres on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Beerbee Mungnari was born on the Waterloo cattle station near the border of Northern Territory and Western Australia. He later served as a ringer (cowboy) on Rosewood Station in the Kimberley, owned by the legendary rancher Jack Kilfoyle. Mungnari started painting around 1982, when the Warmun school was established. Prior to the founding of the Warmun Art Centre in 1998, works from the region were distributed at the Waringarri Arts Centre at Kununurra.

A striking feature of the landscape near Turkey Creek, where the Warmun community lives, is a natural rock formation known as the Bungle Bungle Range (Purnululu is the Indigenous name), which features prominently in much of Warmun painting, especially in works by Jack Britten, who influenced Mungnari. Formed from striped sandstone, the orange-and-gray domed rocks rise almost a thousand feet in elevation at certain points and resemble beehive clusters that seem to emerge mysteriously from the surrounding land. Mungnari captured the striped domes in this picture, showing, with his vertical layering, how they recede into the distance. The area, now part of Purnululu National Park, became a World Heritage Site in 2003.

# Yinarupa Nangala

Australian, born c. 1958  
Pintupi, Papunya/Kiwirrkurra

## Mukulka

2013

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Yinarupa Nangala was born at the sacred Mukula (or Mukulka) rock hole site, which features in many of her works. Her Country is located in the remote Kiwirrkurra region of Western Australia, about 430 miles west of Alice Springs and Papunya. She lives in Alice Springs and is affiliated with Papunya Tula Artists, where she is a second-generation maker. She learned to paint from her father, Anatjari Tjampitjinpa, who was one of the founding members of Papunya Tula Artists in the mid-1970s. She didn't begin until 1996, however, just two years after women were invited to begin painting in the community.

Dozens of women gather at Mukula in this luminous picture, represented by the U-shapes that are grouped together. Mukula lies along the ancestral routes of the Tingari cycle, and women often traveled there to participate in ceremonies with men, the sites of which are designated here by complex circular forms. The various shapes in the painting can be understood as attributes of the land, and the circular outlines with dots in the middle are likely the bush foods collected there, such as Kampurarrpa berries (desert raisins), which can be eaten directly or pounded into a sweet dough and cooked, or Pura (bush tomatoes) which are about the size of apricots and picked from the Solanum shrub.

Eileen Napaltjarri  
Australian, born 1945  
Pintupi, Papunya/Kintore

**Tjiturrulpa**  
2005

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Elieen Napaltjarri was born and raised in Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff) in the Central Desert, just south of Papunya and about 140 miles west of Alice Springs. Her father, Charlie Tararu Tjungurrayi, was one of the founding members of Papunya Tula Artists, and her mother, Tatali Nangala, was also a successful artist with the collective. The family moved together to Kintore, when it was established in 1981. After Nangala died in 1999, Napaltjarri began painting more frequently and is now a highly regarded second-generation maker of the Central and Western Desert painting movement.

Napaltarri’s subject in this work is her father’s Country—the rock hole and soakage site of Tjiturrulpa—located in the rocky hills west of Kintore. The two large concentric circles in the center are the soakage sites, while the surrounding rose-hued roundels are foods collected in the area: the Jitjara (desert yam), Pura (bush tomato), Kampurarrpa (desert raisin), and Yalka (bush onion).

## Pansy Napangardi

Australian, born c. 1949  
Luritja/Warlpiri, Papunya

## Napperby (Ceremonial Board)

1988

Painted wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Pansy Napangardi was born in Haasts Bluff to a Luritja mother and Warlpiri father. She moved to Papunya in 1959 and began painting in the 1970s after observing the work of Papunya men Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula, Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa, and Old Mick Wallankarri Tjakamarra. She first started selling her pictures independently in Alice Springs and then joined Papunya Tula Artists in 1983, moving back to Alice Springs in 1989.

Ceremonial boards such as this are used by women of the Warlpiri language group of central Australia in their dance rituals. They make the boards from the hard wood of the mulga (*Acacia aneura*), an evergreen wattle tree common in central Australia that bears bright yellow flowers in the spring. During the ceremony the women paint symbols relating to the particular ritual with ochre and dance with the boards in both hands while singing. The U-shapes on these boards represent the women sitting on the ground participating in the ceremony.

## Kayi Kayi Nampitjinpa

Australian, born c. 1945

Pintupi, Kintore

## Women Dreaming

2000

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Kayi Kayi Nampitjinpa was born near Kiwirrkurra and now lives in Kintore, which was established as an outstation of Papunya in 1981. She is a second-generation maker affiliated with Papunya, who assisted the first-generation male artists, but who only began painting herself in 1996.

This image of the artist’s Country depicts the sandhills of the desert in black lines that alternate with fine white dots. In the upper right corner a sacred event transpires in a cave. Nampitjinpa presents the primary subject in a flattened naturalist manner—a woman lying on her back with her arms and legs splayed. She has just given birth, and her baby is shown beneath her. Six women who participated in the birth, represented traditionally with U-shapes, surround the mother and child. Outside the entrance of the blocked cave, footprints circle the area—people pacing anxiously to receive news and greet the newborn.

Millie Skeen Nampitjin

Australian, c. 1932–1997  
Kukatja, Balgo

Kameradda, in the Great

## Sandy Desert (Wati Kutjara)

1996

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

In this painting, Millie Skeen Nampitjin, affiliated with Warlayriti Artists, paints her Country in the Great Sandy Desert, about 180 miles south of Balgo. Kameradda is located in a remote part of the desert near Yaparú, both of which are typical subjects of the artist. The painting also relates to the Wati Kutjara (Two Goanna Men) Dreaming, an epic songline that connects language groups from the western and southern regions. Many people believe their sacred ancestors, who were men related to the iguana, descended from the mountains during the Dreaming and traversed a large expanse of the land, from Wilkinkara (Lake Mackay) to Spinifex, creating natural phenomena related to specific ceremonial sites and leaving traces of their presence in the land formations. Here, a small bird—represented by the trio of black lines that designate its footprints—warns the young brothers that a menacing group of people are trying to capture them. The large circles at the top of the painting denote the group, while the Wati Kutjara men gather food at the base of the painting.

## Lucky Morton Kngwarreye

Australian, b. 1950

Alyawarre, Utopia

# Camp Scene

Not dated

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

The traditional lands of the Pila Nguru, or Spinifex people, are in Western Australia’s Great Victoria Desert—the largest in the country—and border South Australia. Their name comes from the tall grasses that are the dominant plant species in that part of the desert, a region they have inhabited for tens of thousands of years.

The Pila Nguru people were dispossessed and placed in Christian missions when their lands were designated by the British and Australian governments for atomic testing between 1952 and 1957. In the 1980s people from Spinifex returned to settle at Tjuntjuntjara, where about 200 people live today. In 1997 they founded the Spinifex Arts Project to record, in large collaborative paintings their role as traditional owners of the land. The paintings were key pieces of evidence in the legal argument to prove a Native Title Claim to their land, which they won in 2000.



# Lorna Brown Napanangka

Australian, born c. 1961

Pintupi, Papunya

## **Untitled**

2003

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Rosie Nanyuma

Napurrurla

Australian, born c. 1935

Kukatja, Balgo

**Talli**

1997

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Albert Mathalu

Australian, born 1935  
Wangurri, Elcho Island

## **Sacred Wangurri Chest Design**

1999

Ochres on paper

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Johnny Yungut Tjupurrula

Australian, c. 1930–2016

Pintupi, Papunya/Kiwirrkurra

## **Malparingya Rockhole**

2004

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Paddy Fordham Wainburranga

Australian, c. 1932–2006

Rembarrnga, Wugularr (Beswick)/Maningrida

**Bush Birds and Insects**

1994

Paint on French paper

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Paddy Fordham Wainburranga

Australian, c. 1932–2006

Rembarrnga, Wugularr (Beswick)/Maningrida

## **Rumbulmiddi (The Song Man)**

1994

Painted wood

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Spinifex Men's Collaborative (artists unrecorded)

Australian

Pitjantjatjara, Spinifex

## **Men's Combined**

2001

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,

gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

**Dorrie Jones Petyarre**

Australian, born 1969

Alyawarre, Utopia

**Women's Ceremony**

1997

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,



gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

**Tali Tali Pompey**

Australian, c. 1945–2011

Pitjantjatjara, Kaltjiti

(left)

## **Ngura (Country)**

2004

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

(left)

## **Ngura (Country)**

2004

Acrylic on linen

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Gloria Tamerre Petyarre

Australian, 1938–2021

Anmatyerre, Utopia

## **Mountain Devil Awelye**

1992

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

# Gloria Tamerre Petyarre

Australian, 1938–2021

Anmatyerre, Utopia

## **Aknangkere Growth**

1998

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

Lily Hargraves Nungarrayi

Australian, 1930–2018

Warlpiri, Lajamanu

**Untitled**

2007

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of the Nevada Museum of Art,  
gift of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

David Cox

Australian, born c. 1968

Goonlyandi/Walmajarri, Warmun

**Sing Out Spring –  
Yiyili Country**

2008

Ochres on linen

Collection of Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi

