

PEKING ART ASSOCIATES



FOR WILLIAM EDWARD SIMMS

*My Grandfather and one of the true pioneers of Australia
- on the occasion of his 100th birthday -*



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves
 Acrylic on Canvas
 2009
 204 x 147 cm

Jeannie Petyarre
Bush Yam Leaf (opposite)
 Acrylic on Canvas
 2011
 148 x 110 cm

DESERT SPIRIT ROCK

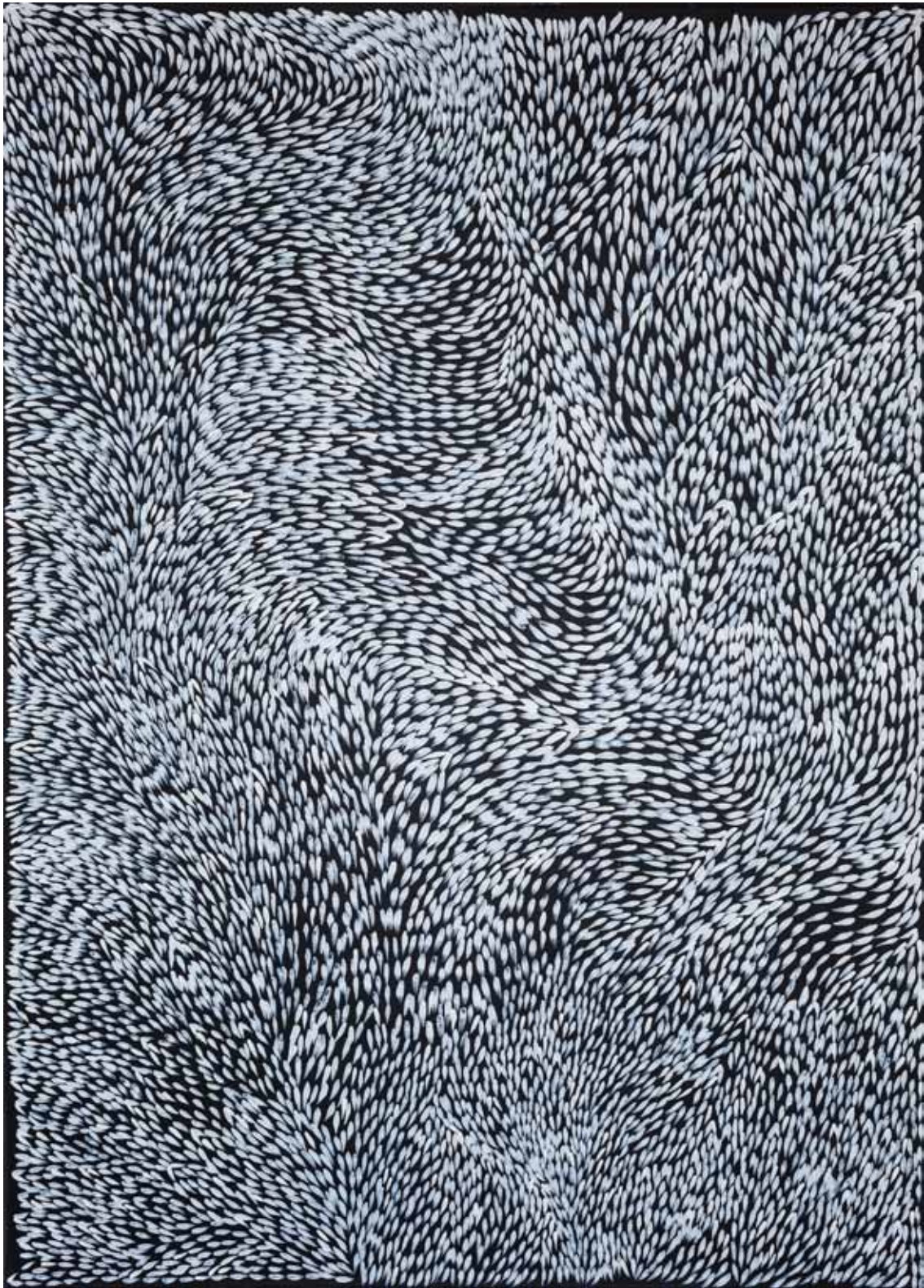


**A GROUP EXHIBITION OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN DESERT ART
AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE SCHOLAR'S ROCKS**

CURATED BY SASCHA GIANELLA

WITH DEDICATION BY E.S. DE WOLFE PETTIT & INTERVIEWS BY MICHELLE HO

TRANSLATION: LI YIHUI & UBICA



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
205 x 144 cm

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DEDICATION

EMILY DE WOLFE PETTIT

THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AND MY MOTHER'S FAMILY share a long connection, both to each other, and in dedication of their lives to the country they love. While not of the desert, my maternal grandfather, a true pioneer of the deep north-east of the continent, is all too familiar with how equally harsh the flora and fauna of the lush tropics can be - and over the course of now near one hundred years he has learnt too her unexpected secrets to sustaining human life. For an artist and appreciative eye, Australia possesses enviable natural beauty and a unique richness of bio-diversity. Compounded to this is exquisite light, infinite textural capacity, and the endless, intoxicating layers of fragrance. But, for all its visual beauty and Mother Nature's sensory concoctions are the fits and starts of mental isolation and spiritual attachment to which the human condition is inevitably prone when alone in such vast landscapes. I imagine my grandfather experienced spells of each as gatekeeper, infiltrator and caretaker of the jungle from young teenage-hood throughout his adult life - often alone, much like an artist, and particularly an Indigenous Australian artist with deep knowledge of the land.



On the move - this decade eastwards - are the art works themselves. Chinese audiences have enjoyed a growing number of Australian Aboriginal art exhibitions over recent years. In 2010 the National Museum of China (NAMOC) staged the exhibition *Aboriginal Art from Australia's Deserts* featuring the works of artists from Papunya and Balgo. Forming part of *Imagine Australia: the Year of Australian Culture in China* this was a multi-disciplinary arts festival of Australia's finest visual arts, film, literature, music, dance and new media, which opened to throngs of delighted crowds by then Australian Ambassador to China, Dr Geoff Raby. More recently, between 2011-2013, Australian curator Gary Proctor has staged a major and hugely popular touring exhibition *Tu Di ~ Shen Ti (My Land, My Body)* at state and private museums up and down the country. Based on a selection of works from the Warburton Art Centre's collection, it is the largest Australian art exhibition ever staged in China. Furthermore, the past decade has seen a sharp uptake in cultural reciprocity between Australia and China, with Chinese artists traveling to the spiritual and cultural heartlands of indigenous Australia and creating works inspired by their encounters there.



*Offering a lift
My Grandfather, William Edward Simms (opposite)
and, above, with a group of local Aboriginals,
Far North Queensland, Australia, 1930's*

It is my great pleasure to showcase a beautiful selection of Aboriginal Australian art in Beijing and moreover to work with someone as informed, professional and dedicated to her chosen field of expertise as Sascha Gianella. Now based in Geneva, Switzerland, Gianella is highly respected in her field for her knowledge and close relationships with some of the most high profile artists from the wide Aboriginal art community of Australia. Our collaboration focuses on works inspired by the Central desert region of Australia and within this vast geographical area, Gianella has selected a group of renowned female Aboriginal artists and works with important community provenance. As Gianella explains to interviewer Michelle Ho, female Aboriginal Australian artists have historically played second fiddle to male artists, traditionally given the task of filling backgrounds and body painting; like men however, Aboriginal women have played a key role in social cohesion and the works in *Desert Spirit Rock* play tribute through a focus on ceremony (Mbitjana and Watson) and the powers of natural healing (Jeannie and Gloria Tamerre Petyarre).

This exhibition is defined by another millennia old incarnation of landscape - Chinese Scholar's Rocks. The gnarled forms, like the Indigenous Australian pictures alongside them, share highly symbolic, non-naturalistic qualities; but if the paintings exude vital, Dionysian qualities, the Scholar's Rock instills Apollonian contemplation and deep quietude. Part natural evolution, part artisan's intervention, Scholar's Rocks were first collected for the context of domestic studies in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), with larger examples making their first appearances in gardens also at this time. Most



coveted in form were stones as nodular as possible, with allusions to soaring peaks or dark, dimpled caves, intended to evoke much wider landscapes of the mind. Essential too was the impression of an absent human hand - the writhing, reaching forms almost rejection to interference and over-think in favour of the process - much as the unfolding of the calligrapher's score, his tool not simply the brush but the engagement of his whole body with the material and spiritual. The result, an illusion of involuntary, unpremeditated ephemerality captured in Scholar's Rocks, underscores one of the key aspirations of traditional Chinese artistic practice. Closely interwoven as the visual arts of China historically were, Scholar's Rocks made their first appearance in Chinese painting sometime mid-way through the Tang dynasty, and, like classical Chinese painting, the hand behind the Scholar's Rock remained unknown and the works themselves undated. It is gratifying to now witness a renewed (and worldwide) interest in the Scholar's Rock as a feature of contemporary Chinese painting, with reverence shown through the exacting verisimilitude of skillful contemporary artists such as Liu Dan, Li Huayi and Zeng Xiaojun. In the case of all artists inspired by the natural world, whether of the open Australian desert or the confines of the Chinese scholar's chambers, they are not only inspired by nature, sympathetic to her, but given over to her ability to both dissipate and conversely, to distill.



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
205 x 144 cm

Painted Chinese Scholar's Rock (opposite)
Anonymous Artist

INTRODUCTION

SASCHA GIANELLA

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART is the oldest ongoing tradition of art in the world. Initial forms of artistic Aboriginal expression were rock carvings, body painting and ground designs, which date back more than thirty thousand years. The quality and variety of Australian Indigenous art produced today reflects the richness and diversity of indigenous culture and the distinct differences between tribes, languages, dialects and geographic landscapes. Art has always been an important part of Aboriginal life, connecting past and present, the people and the land, and the supernatural and reality.



The artists chosen for this exhibition come from one of the most remote regions in Australia, the Central Desert. Much of Australia is covered by deserts which appear empty and inhospitable to the uninitiated, but to the Aboriginal groups who inhabit these areas, these lands created by their ancestors are rich in physical sustenance and infused with spiritual meaning.



The physical isolation of the desert meant that European settlers did not enter these regions until around 1860. The impact of European settlement had detrimental effects on Aboriginal cultural practises and social circumstances. Aboriginal people were taken away from their lands and forced to live in established outstations. It was not until the federal political changes of the 1970's that Indigenous people were permitted and encouraged to return to live on their ancestral lands. Aboriginal councils have established cooperatives to operate as buffers between the traditional social and cultural concerns of artists and the demands and the expectations of the outside world. Until the arrival of Europeans in Australia in the 18th century, Aboriginal art was made purely to fulfil traditional cultural needs, and this has remained the case in varying degrees since. In the ceremonial sphere, art may only be created and viewed by those initiated to the proper level of awareness. However, in modern times, a significant body of art has emerged which is intended for the wider, public domain.

The desert art movement has come to be seen as one of the most significant art movements of the 20th century. For it was here in 1971 that the styles of the Western Desert traditionally developed for painting on the body or ground changed dramatically when a local schoolteacher, Geoffrey Bardon (1940 - 2003), introduced paints and canvas to the community, and many artists began adapting their styles to take advantage of these newly-introduced, Western mediums.

The artists of the Central Australian Desert are known for their colourful acrylic paintings. The maintenance and ongoing transmission of Aboriginal culture to the next generation is an integral part of every art centre's mission. Every painting produced at an art centre has a 'Dreaming' associated to it and each art centre has an important repository for painting archives of local culture.



Gallery Installation Views:

Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (opposite, in detail and right)
Acrylic on Linen & Acrylic on Canvas
2010 & 2011
200 x 159 cm and 205 x 144 cm respectively

THE INTERVIEW

SASCHA GIANELLA & MICHELLE HO



Michelle Ho: Why is this a good time to bring Australian Aboriginal art into China?

Sascha Gianella: The spectacular growth of the Chinese economy over the past 3 decades has given the Chinese people purchasing power, education possibilities and access to lifestyles that are willing to afford and invest in art. The Chinese are also actively acquainting themselves with their own historical and cultural identity and that of other nations. Australia has a migratory history of Chinese people coming into the country (and vice versa) for education, trade, culture and opportunity, which has had an impact on the knowledge that the Chinese have of Australia and its history. As the Aboriginal art movement is considered the most significant in Australia's art history, many Indigenous artists have become familiar names in the art world and considered highly collectable. This is certainly not being overlooked by Chinese collectors.

MH: What do you think would appeal to the Chinese audience in terms of the style or content of the art?

SG: China and Australia both have ancient historical and cultural heritages, thus I believe there an identification of and respect for similarities and differences between each culture that the Chinese perhaps, find interesting.

For example, Zhou Xiaoping, a Chinese artist, moved to Australia and lived among the Aboriginal people from 1989 for several years. They had a profound impact on his work and his philosophy. What fascinated him was the Aboriginal people's connection to the land – something he also felt and represented in his own work of his homeland in China. He also recognised that the line work and iconography of Aboriginal artists was similar to Chinese calligraphy. Not just in the way it was applied but that the symbols were a way of reducing something complex into something simple. His observations encouraged him to explore the culture more closely and he observed that the Aboriginal people (especially his collaboration partner Jimmy Pike) had a liberating effect on his art and his attitude towards his own art.

MH: That's interesting about iconography because Chinese characters in their original form were also developed as pictographs or some kind of ideograph.

SG: The iconography and symbolism in Australian Indigenous artwork is a sacred language. Artwork was once limited to bark painting, rock engravings or symbolism that was painted onto sculpture, objects or for ceremony. Historically, non-Indigenous people attempted to have sacred iconography and figures translated into a form that could be shown

to the wider public and it was up to the elders to come up with a way to simplify but also hide what was sacred in their artwork. The technique of dot painting emerged from the necessity to conceal figurative elements so that the non-initiated could not identify what sacred symbolism beneath the dots. New iconography and symbols were created for the same effect.

MH: So how do Aboriginal people continue to pass down (to the initiated) the sacred iconography and symbols? Do they paint for themselves and separately for the public?

SG: For the Aboriginal people, art was never traditionally made for art's sake. The artwork we see is created for the public. Art is a form of expression of culture. The desert artists' artwork – or at least what we call artwork – was painted



onto bodies or into the dust of the desert. Once the ceremony was complete ochres were washed off bodies and sand paintings were either rubbed out or disappeared with the wind, rain, time. Traditional designs are still being used in ceremonial and ritualistic contexts, however what is being transferred onto canvas, although referencing sacred knowledge, is produced primarily from a market perspective.

Information is passed down from generation to the next orally, through words, storytelling, art and dance. Aboriginal people would learn about the Dreaming, the land, sacred sites, catching and collecting good and finding water through watching, listening and doing. Before British colonisation there were up to 600 different Indigenous language groups in Australia. Each language has its own laws, customs and sacred sites. Often there was contact between groups and they would trade, share materials and participate in ceremonies and rituals allowing them to pass on stories and information. This explains why there are similar elements of Indigenous culture between groups. And Indigenous child is brought up not just by the mother and father, but by aunts and uncles and has strong ties with brothers, sisters and cousins. Some information learnt by children is not passed on until they become an adult and it is considered so important. This is passed on through initiation ceremonies.

Gallery Installation Views:

The Gesture of Indigenous Australian Artists (above)
Calligraphy by Denis Brown and Ma Tianbo
Ink on upper Gallery Wall

Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (detail, opposite)
Acrylic on Canvas
2009
204 x 147 cm

It is not known how much Indigenous knowledge has been lost since the arrival of the first settlers. However, effort is being made by the Aboriginal people to pass on the information that does still exist to the generations that follow – and art is one such medium to do this.

MH: Is there an Aboriginal word for art or artwork?

SG: There is no one word in Aboriginal language for the term 'art'.

Each group has a word that means 'designs and ceremonies'. For example, in Walpiri, men's designs and ceremonies are called *Kuruwarri*. Women's designs and ceremonies are called *Yawulyu*. In Central and North East Arnhem Land the word for painted clan patterns or designs is *Miny'tji*.

MH: You mentioned the artists in this exhibition are drivers of innovation and experimentation?

SG: What is considered as innovation and experimentation today in contemporary art terms, what is encouraged in art centres, is to develop a highly individualistic style. So although an artist may reference their nominated *Dreaming*, for example 'Water Dreaming', that which is shared by many artists – what becomes interesting is how each artist represents their story. One might reference a storm, another the shape of a drop, another a vast landscape with water flowing through it. The art world is interested in authenticity, yet individualism in terms of technique and styles.

MH: What are some of the important innovations?

SG: Dot painting, for one. Dot painting emerged in Papunya Tula in the 1970's to conceal the traditional visual language of the Western Desert Aboriginal people. The subsequent paintings produced are now valued for their innovation and complexity in order to conceal deeper spiritual meaning and symbolism.

Three of the paintings in this exhibition are by **Gloria Tamerre Petyarre**. Her brushwork has led her to being one of Australia's most famous artists. Petyarre paints the *Dreaming of Bush Medicine Leaves*. Using the end of the paintbrush she makes a mark that resembles a leaf. Her canvases are filled with swirling, whirling bush leaves giving the viewer the sense of great movement. A technique that is now often replicated and revered by collectors and curators worldwide.

Another innovative artist is **Judy Watson**, whose work is also on display in this exhibition. Her innovation lies in her extraordinary and psychedelic colour range. Judy also uses a unique dot and drag technique, never lifting the paintbrush from the surface of the canvas. It has been said that this way of applying paint is similar to the way in which a woman in a woman's ceremony drags her feet through the dust of the desert.

MH: What did innovation and experimentation look like pre-1970 then?

SG: Prior to the 1970s the public image of Aboriginal art was restricted to 'bark paintings', objects, rock paintings or engravings. Bark paintings became popular with collectors during the 1940s and have been widely produced for sale. From an Aboriginal perspective, a fundamental concern is to take a bark painting from a rough, dull state to one of brightness and brilliance. This is achieved through the visual density or the *miny'tji* or cross hatched clan designs and the build up of layers of colour culminating in the use of white cross hatching. The effect aimed for is one of 'visual shimmer', which aligns concepts of paintings in the ceremonial context, whereby the designs are intended to be sensed rather than viewed, as they are after all, the embodiment of the power of supernatural ancestral beings.

In a Western art context, perhaps the most experimental Aboriginal artist pre-1970 would be **Albert Namatjira** (1902 - 1959) who is still considered as one of Australia's most prominent artists of all time. His watercolour Australian outback desert landscapes derived from the Hermannsburg School of Aboriginal art, set up by the Lutheran missionaries in

Central Australia. There he met Australian watercolour artist **Rex Batterbee** who tutored Namatijra in the Western style of painting, and helped him to organize his first exhibition. The school's predominantly Western painting style was a vast departure from traditional Aboriginal designs and mark making.

MH: What is unique about the *Dreamings* and work of Central Desert artists?

SG: The *Dreaming* is a European term used by Aboriginal people to describe the spiritual, moral and natural order of the cosmos since the beginning of time. It describes the creation of the world by spiritual ancestors and relates the laws of social and religious behavior by an intricate web of ceremonies, stories and ritual. The entire continent of Australia is covered by *Dreamings* – some relate to a particular place or region to those who reside there, others travel vast distances and may be connected to other *Dreamings*. An individual's link with the ancestral beings in the *Dreaming* and his or her spiritual identity are expressed in totemic associations with natural species and phenomena, ritual songs, dances objects and graphic designs. The events of the *Dreaming* provide the great themes of Aboriginal art.

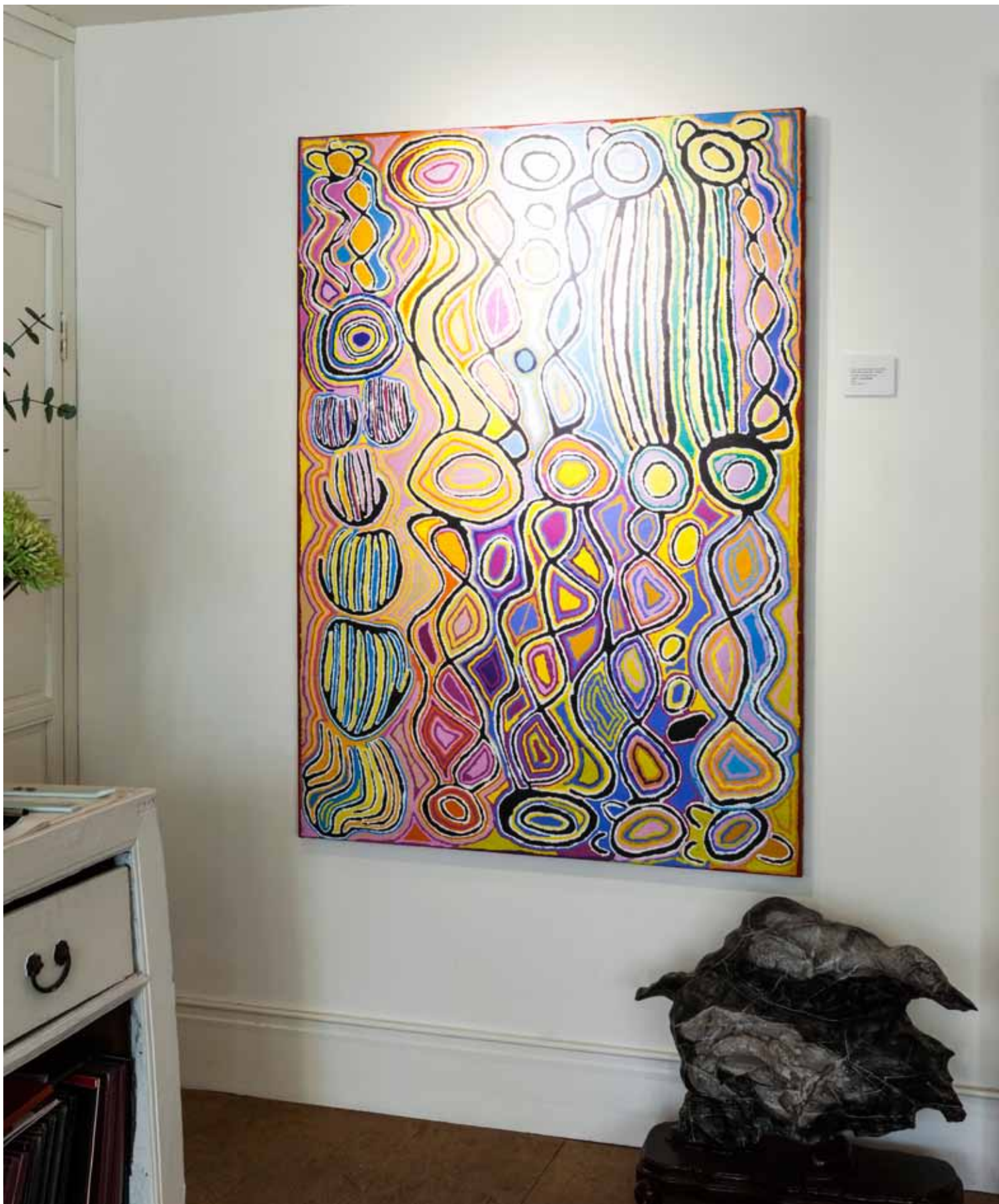
What is unique to Desert art is simply a reflection of geography and traditional practices. The Aboriginal people living in this area never produced art on bark such as in northern regions where these materials were present. The art produced for ceremony in the desert was traditionally painted on bodies or in the sand, thus in the 1970's when the desert artists started translating their traditional designs onto first board and then canvas, they were translating their iconography related to their *Dreamings* relevant to them and their country. What is typical of Desert art iconography are graphic symbols such as concentric circles, semi circles, arrows, lines and of course, the dot. Certain conventional compositional structures and pictorial devices are favoured by particular groups, unlike the case in areas of Arnhem Land, which may refer to not just one but a number of different *Dreamings*.

In the desert regions, the *Honey Ant Dreaming* is important because the honey ant is common to these regions. In the North many animal *Dreamings* don't relate to the desert region, for instance the alligator and a lot of the water creatures. *The Rainbow Serpent* is central to all Indigenous people however as it is considered as being in control of life's most precious resource, water, and for some cultures it is the creator of everything in the universe. Geographical symbols, such as Uluru, don't exist further north. However, they are all interrelated. That's because the story of creation travels down what the Aboriginal people call a 'songline'. A songline is a path of travel that goes from one region to another. And often when aboriginal people travel long distances, what is called 'walkabout', they would travel down these lines to another sacred spot, having ceremony along the way, perhaps hunting and gathering food, but they would be always travelling down the same path. These traditions were handed down from one generation to the next. And they were told this is the particular path on which you will find this particular food, where this particular ceremony is found, where this particular sacred site is found. So many people thought aboriginals were amazing trackers because often their *Dreamings* span vast geographical regions. They just knew their land very well.

Also the artists of the desert are from the last region to be inhabited by settlers. Originally when Australia was colonised, it wasn't considered possible for anyone to live in the desert. But the environment is extremely rich for those who do! Missionaries didn't reach these areas until much later on and these were the last artists to be discovered

MH: You spend time with the artists themselves. From your conversations, what do you find most interesting?

SG: The paintings that are produced by the hands of the elders – many of whom are in their 80's and beyond – resonate with a dynamism that is more apt to a younger artist, and that I find fascinating and inspiring. Colours burst from the canvas, line work is spontaneous with a fluidity that belies confidence and a strong connection with the subject matter. These artists are among the last generation of Aboriginal people to have lived self sufficiently off traditional lands prior to the arrival of settlers, and thus with that itself in mind, these artists are a privilege to be around. When you see the two paintings by **Judy Watson** in this exhibition, you're just blown away that these artists can produce such paintings with such physical presence at their age.





Gallery Installation Views:

Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (above)
 Acrylic on Canvas
 2009

204 x 147 cm
 Painted Chinese Scholar's Rocks

Judy Napangardi Watson
Mina Mina Jukurrpa - Ngalyipi (above)
 Acrylic on Belgian Linen
 2012
 152 x 107 cm

MH: Your favourite work in this exhibition?

SG: No favourites. They are all chosen for their uniqueness and faith to the theme of colour and experimentation.

MH: The history of Western art can be characterised as the rise and fall of different schools and styles. Chinese art, by comparison, exhibits a degree of continuity and collective consciousness of tradition up until the last dynasty - now we are seeing the old made new again. What do you think has enabled such remarkable continuity in Aboriginal art?

SG: The continuity of Aboriginal art is remarkable because it is not just about 'art' - thus the Western concept of art is not relevant in this context. As in Chinese culture, Aboriginal art is a way of life, a way of referencing life, and as explained previously, it is a form of expression that has inherent ties to the *Dreaming* - the foundation from which Aboriginal people look at life, their place in it, and the creation of it. As this is the very basis of their belief system, like any religion, whole cultures and societies are built around it, and survive on it. The 'continuity' derives from the Aboriginal people's drive and necessity to keep their culture alive.

MH: So in China, we're seeing a revival of interest and with it, innovation, in traditional art forms, especially ink painting, which is all the rage. You will get young artists who say it doesn't make sense to brand me as a Chinese artist. I just paint what I paint. On the other hand, there are those who are very conscious of their heritage and say I am choosing to paint with a distinct Chinese consciousness - to represent or reflect this lineage.

SG: I think the same could be said of the Aboriginal artists.

The artists we've chosen for this exhibition are referencing specific spiritual meaning and tell the stories of a particular people. On the other hand, there are other artists, many from urban areas, who ethnically and culturally identify as Indigenous, but who engage in more recognizably Western or global art practises, such as Tracey Moffatt for example, who prefer to be considered as a contemporary Australian artists, as the notion of Aboriginal art brings to mind dot paintings from rural and remote communities and thus many artists struggle to be seen in the same way as their non-Indigenous counterparts.

MH: Would it be correct to say that Aboriginal artists seem less concerned with the personal than with the timelessness that runs through them?

SG: I think they are all concerned with the personal. Each Aboriginal person is individually affiliated with a *Dreaming*, or several, and although they may share the same *Dreaming* with another member of the group, it is entirely up to the artist as to how they choose to represent their *Dreaming*, granting each artist the liberty to develop a personal style.

There are also many artists who relate distinctly personal stories in their artworks such as Queenie McKenzie, whilst a distilled, linear and abstract aesthetic typical of Warmun artists, liked to paint her story of when she stitched up the scalped head of Rover Thomas after he was thrown from a horse.

Similarly, the heavy flow of traffic in Japan's capital city was the creative impetus for Tokyo Crossroads, 1996, one of Rover Thomas most iconic images. This emblematic work, whilst also using traditional ochres and the minimalist style renown of East Kimberley painting and printmaking, reaffirms Thomas' own unique vision and sense of identity as a contemporary Australian artist.

MH: How do these artists work - their process?

SG: For the artists in this show, the works have been produced in community groups or at Art Centres. The Art Centre cooperatives are considered as being central to the emergence of Indigenous Australian art. From this perspective, the artists paint together in groups, often with generations of family or community members around them, and their dogs. It's a social affair.

All artists paint differently, but many map out key iconography then bold areas of colour and dots are used to fill in the geometric patterning.

MH: How has the introduction of acrylics and canvases changed their practice?

SG: For the wider public, art is painted to be sold. What is positive about this process is that painting at the Art Centres is a social practice – many of the younger generations watch and learn, and all are encouraged to participate. In many communities around Australia, rituals and ceremonies are not being performed anymore so I would dare to say that without the Art Centres, perhaps much more of the Aboriginal culture, knowledge and heritage would be lost and much faster.

MH: Do you see them becoming even more daring with new materials in the future?

SG: Many Indigenous artists have been experimenting with new materials for decades. Fiona Foley, (the 'other') Judy Watson, Tracey Moffatt, Danie Mellor, Destiny Deacon, Marianne Riphagen and Dennis Nonna are merely just a few who work with film, performance and various mixed media. The installations of Indigenous artist Vernon Ah Kee formed part of Australia's representation at the 2009 Venice Biennale. The difference between these artists and the desert artists in this show is often a difference in 'art school' training. Many artists are either from are moving to urban centres and going to art school which teaches Western and global art practices.

MH: You focus on female artists in this exhibition. Any particular reason?

SG: There just happens to be an incredible number of women artists in the desert region producing exceptional quality work. From what began as a predominantly male practice, desert women were encouraged by anthropologists to paint their own *Dreamings* in the 1980's. Women were allowed to paint as long as they used colours in addition to the ceremonial ochres, yellows, blacks and whites. Ironically, the colourful palette and free handing of paint is what has helped turn Aboriginal art into the greatest movement in Australia's art history.

MH: You mention that a couple of the artists in this exhibition are related to famous artists. How important is pedigree in terms of the value of an Aboriginal artwork?

SG: Pedigree does not make a great artist. However, in Aboriginal society, the influence of clan membership is paramount. A person attains status by the acquisition of knowledge, and knowledge is attained via initiation ceremonies and ritual, yet prestige is given to age. Thus an elder will have the ability to paint aspects of a subject that a younger and non-initiated artist won't have, and thus the resulting works are often highly regarded in terms of representation of sacred designs, and thus value follows suit.

MH: It's a whole new world. What do your clients and collectors look for? What should first time buyers know?

SG: My advice is to buy through reputable dealers and Art Centres. In order to identify a strong work, it is to know that the artist has successfully depicted his or her subject matter in both a cultural sense and with artistic merit, and

this can take a little training! One must look at many works by a single artist over a period of time in order to identify what makes this artist unique, and what is considered as a strong work. A dealer or Art Centre is well-positioned in this regard.

Also, due to the influx of fakes and poor quality works in the market, provenance is important. All the major auction houses take provenance very seriously and only take in works that they are 100% sure of.

Importantly, work with ethical dealers. The artists deserve to be paid fairly and treated well, and the collector deserves to be assured that they have purchased an authentic work at market value and to be provided with an authenticity certificate.

MH: Can we use the same framework in contemporary art to assess and talk about Aboriginal art?

SG: Yes. The artists in this exhibition and those practicing around Australia are producing work in the here and now, and irrespective of their domicile, experience or heritage, are creating contemporary works that are nothing like what has ever been produced before.

MH: Should the new audience be aware of all the moral issues surrounding the production and circulation of aboriginal art?

SG: Yes. Dealers and those who deal with Indigenous art, play a key role in ensuring that Indigenous art and culture is respected and appreciated, rather than exploited. It is our responsibility to develop links with our clients and the broader community to ensure that in exhibiting or promoting Aboriginal art that we respect the wishes and restrictions of the artists, and that we acknowledge the responsibility and relationship that the Aboriginal people associated with country and culture.

MH: Aboriginal art developed in a system of its own. What's your assessment of the Aboriginal art world (curators, artists, critics, galleries, collectors, art centres, auction houses) as it goes global? What needs to be done?

SG: The good news is that there are many extremely talented, knowledgeable and enthusiastic people that work in the Aboriginal art world that are giving it a global stage.

There are, however, a couple of issues. Firstly, there is a lot of poor quality work on the market and a lot of fakes. The control of that seems to be too enormous to tackle. The other problem that I see is that many people in the industry and contemporary art collectors have a very Euro-centric view of Indigenous art – that it is folk art, primitive art, or tribal art and that it doesn't fit into a contemporary art context. It's a matter of education. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, the curator of the 2008 Sydney Biennale, who upon arrival held a prevalent view of Aboriginal art as only being interesting ethnographically, spent considerable time with artists and in communities, and returned with a radical change of opinion. She argues that the prism of ethnography continues to distort a perception of Indigenous art, and as such is now an advocate of Indigenous art and its significant contribution to the contemporary art scene.

MH: For you personally, what makes the works in this exhibition highly collectible?

SG: Whilst drawing upon cultural heritage, each artist has been chosen for their highly individualistic sense of artistic freedom, their ability to experiment and innovate and work that stands separate from their peers yet strongly in the context of international contemporary painting. All of these artists have been received enthusiastically by collectors and curators alike.

Conversations, Hong Kong - Geneva, Winter 2013



Jeannie Petyarre
Bush Yam Leaf (centre, detail)
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
148 x 110 cm
Private Collection, Switzerland

BETTY MBITJANA

Ceremonies play a vital role in Aboriginal society, of which there are segregated ritualistic performances and others that unify the sexes. Women's ceremonies are often concerned with 'awalye' (loosely translated, this means 'women's business') and are generally centred on the subject of fertility. Awalye or yawulyu in Warlpiri refers to women's religious designs which represent ancestral beings, their power, and markings that indicate their presence. The designs of many female artists from Utopia (in the eastern central part of central Australia) are based on awalye, including the paintings of Betty Mbitjana, daughter of renown artist Minne Pwerle and the sister of Barbara Weir – two of Indigenous Australia's most collectable artists.

Mbitjana paints the awalye relating to the bush plum, bush berry or bush melon jukurrpa (Dreaming). Her paintings depict both the physical transference of designs that women would paint on their bodies and the lyrical whim of traces in the desert sands that would be left behind once the women's awalye ceremony has been performed.

Mbitjana's paintings present aerial views of ceremonies depicting sacred waterholes (concentric circles) and movement is represented by the pairs of striped breasts moving forward as the woman dances. The painting in this exhibition also depicts patterns of the seeds of the bush fruit that the women eat during the ceremony. The artists in and around Utopia, despite differences in language and social structure and vast, open distances, share artistic traditions similar to those of western desert inhabitants.

Betty Mbitjana
Awalye & Bush Melon Dreaming (opposite)
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
145 x 91 cm

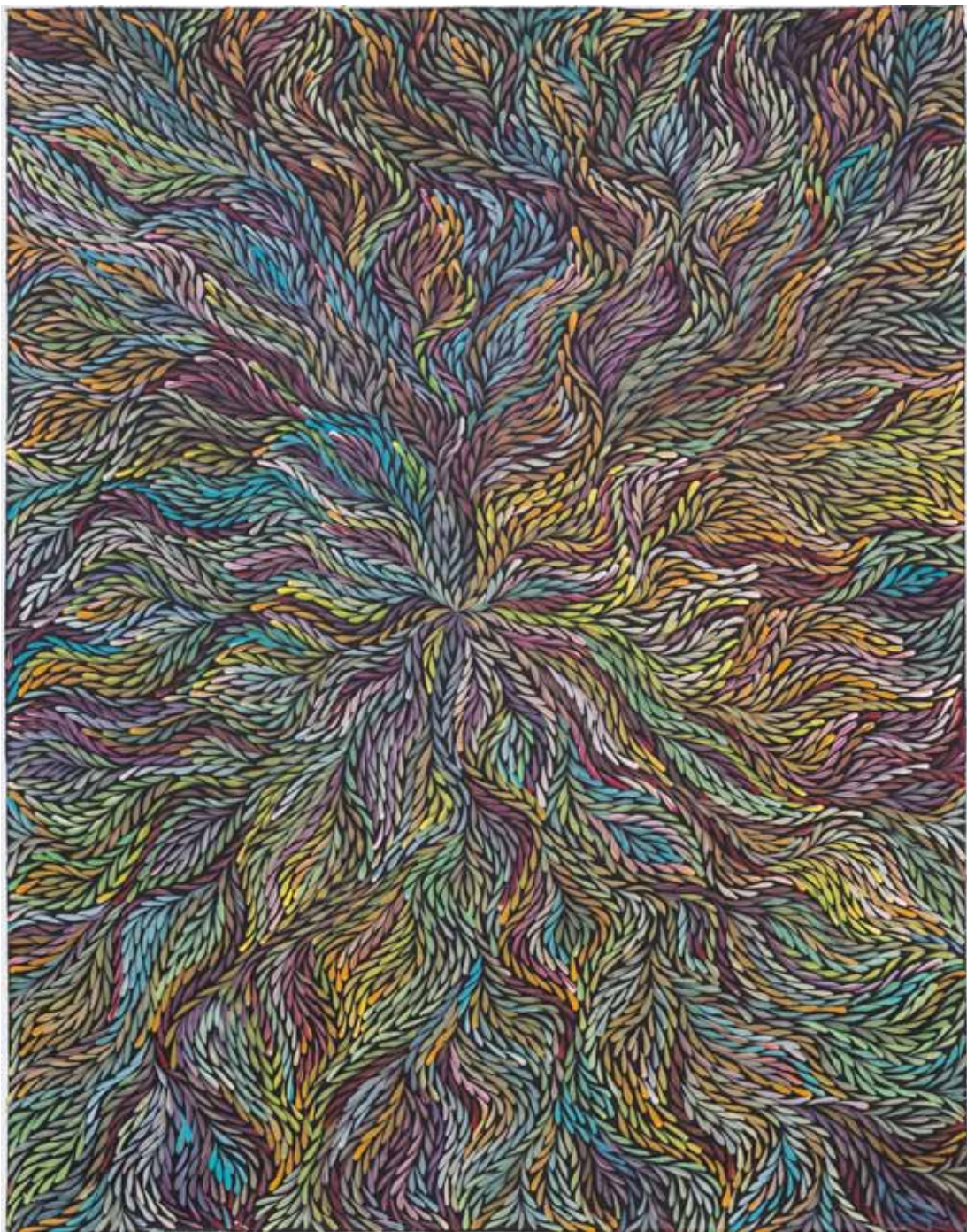


JEANNIE PETYARRE (PITJARA)

The artists in this exhibition are among the most important artists from the central desert region. Paintings from all of the selected artists are represented in major public and private collections both in Australia and internationally. The selected works aim to highlight the innovative use of colour and experimentation with design in desert art, whilst referencing important visual language and ensuring that personal and collective narratives are recorded and passed on to future generations. The canvases are rich in colour and cultural significance and are shrouded in country and ceremony. Organic and curved iconography are daringly intermeshed on fluorescent coloured backgrounds. Concentric circles, as seen in Betty Mbitjana's work on the previous page, hover next to ceremonial grass skirts over electric blue and red hot landscapes. A viewer stands before a heavily multi-coloured spectacle of built-up surface, and is engulfed by a painting of blazing almost hallucinatory beauty. Where some see the desert at barren, another artist such as Jeannie Petyarre presents it in a rainbow of colours – testament to an environment seen as rich in spiritual meaning and physical sustenance.

Artists naturally have their own particular styles or palettes and constantly experiment and vary their paintings. Jeannie Petyarre (Pitjara) Petyarre is known for her Yam Dreaming paintings depicting swirling leaf brushstrokes (not unlike her cousin Gloria Tamerre Petyarre) in vibrant colour compositions representing the symbolic leaf of the Yam plant that replenishes itself year after year.

Jeannie Petyarre hails from a fine artistic heritage, her family include artists Anna Price Petyarre, Gloria Petyarre, Kathleen Petyarre and Ada Bird Petyarre and her Aunt is Emily Kame Kngwarreye.



Jeannie Petyarre
Bush Yam Leaf
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
148 x 110 cm
Private Collection, Switzerland

GLORIA TAMERRE PETYARRE

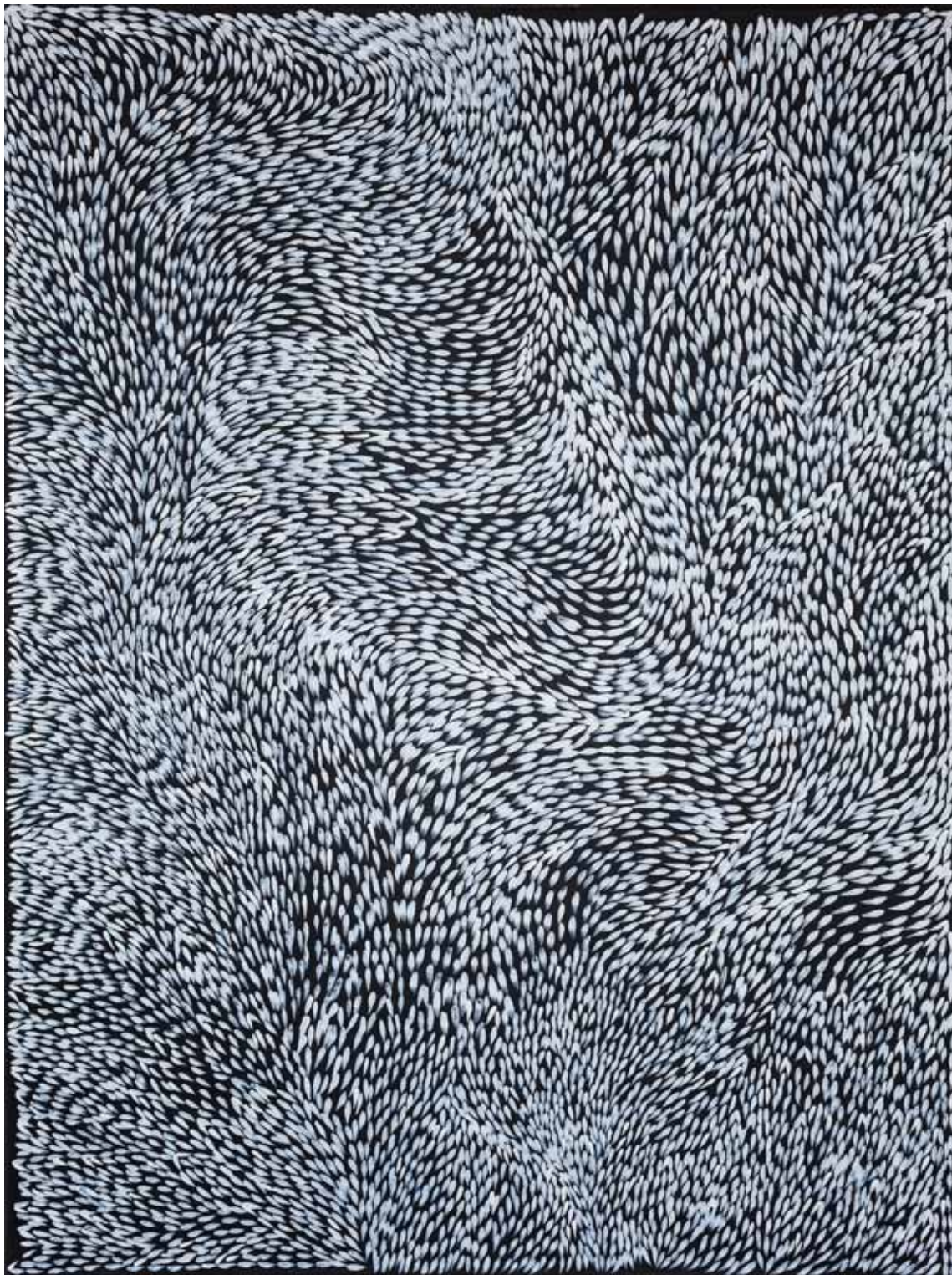
The art of the desert is one of the most significant movements in modern Australian art history, as it was here in 1971, Aboriginal artists were first introduced to synthetic art materials in order to transfer their ancestrally inherited sacred designs for the appreciation of the wider public. Traditionally, desert art takes many forms, from decorated weapons and implements, to personal adornments, to sacred and secret incised boards and stones, rock engravings and paintings, body painting, sand drawings, ceremonial constructions and ground paintings. Whilst classical traditions continue, introduced media such as acrylic paint and canvas are usually employed for the purposes of public art, and the paintings tell the story of the artists' connection to their country, the features of the landscape, the plants and animals found there and the creation myth that is linked to the Dreaming. The Dreaming explains the creation process. Ancestor beings rose and roamed the initially barren land, and created the land's features as we see them today. After creating the 'sacred world' the spiritual beings turned into rocks or trees or a part of the landscape. These became sacred places, to be seen only by initiated men. The spirits of the ancestor beings are passed on to their descendants, for example, shark, kangaroo, honey ant, snake, and so on, and hundreds of others which have become totems within the diverse Indigenous groups across the Australian continent. These stories are still very relevant to Indigenous artists today.



Initially painting was a male occupation, with women either filling in the backgrounds of their male counterparts' paintings or painting artifacts including turruru (music sticks), parraja (traditional food carriers), dancing boards, boomerangs and seed necklaces. Male and female ancestral figures play a major role in the Dreaming and are used to guide men and women in their daily roles. Women are responsible for looking after their young children and gathering food such as seeds, fruit, vegetables, small insects and larvae. Women's paintings are thus often associated with food gathering. Men hunt and share with women the role of law-maker, performer, painter and custodians of traditional ways. They also share the role of traditional healers. For example Warlpiri women from Yuendumu perform yawulya ceremonies to improve the health of sick people, singing songs and painting designs on the sick person and using their knowledge of plants as medicines. Knowledge of traditional medicine is represented in Desert Spirit Rocks through Gloria Tamerre Petyarre's Bush Medicine Leaves series.



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (above and detail, opposite)
Acrylic on Linen
2010
200 x 159 cm



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (above and detail, opposite)
Acrylic on Canvas
2011
205 x 144 cm

*Dreamtime begins
Where every song is the perfect place
Words never spoken
Are the strongest resounding*

*Life force is meant for us
To remember the stars, the earth
Still we forget
So asleep in this dreamtime
Lost in this dreamtime day*



*Take me up into that freedom place and justify
Electrify the senses sharpen than the soul intensify
Nominate that we can break out take, take, take, take together
Hesitate and you will dance on this earth to, to forever*

*You are the choice forever trying
Give you wings forever flying
You can fly, you can glide, you can dream
You can see through this interactive vision streaming*

*You have the faith, so busy trying
So let it go forever flying
To the sky, to the earth, to the moon, to the sea
To the sun, to the stars, to the dream you become*

*Nothing left to lose
Nothing more to prove
With wings of gold
You'll fly away*

*Talk among the prophets
Give you something
Talk among the teachers
Tell you something
Talk among your one true self now
Forever, forever, forever, forever*

- 'Dreamtime', Lyrics by Yes

Petyarre is considered one of the most renowned and significant artists in contemporary Australian Indigenous art history. She is a prolific painter who came into prominence after being awarded the 1999 Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, for her work simply titled Leaves and whose intricately woven gold and green leaf shaped brushstrokes succeeded in capturing the movement reminiscent of the wind blowing the leaves of the native Kurrajong tree. Gloria continues to paint this style, yet she also paints massive 'big leaf' paintings, rendered with giant brushstrokes to fascinating effect, with, it is rumoured, a broom!





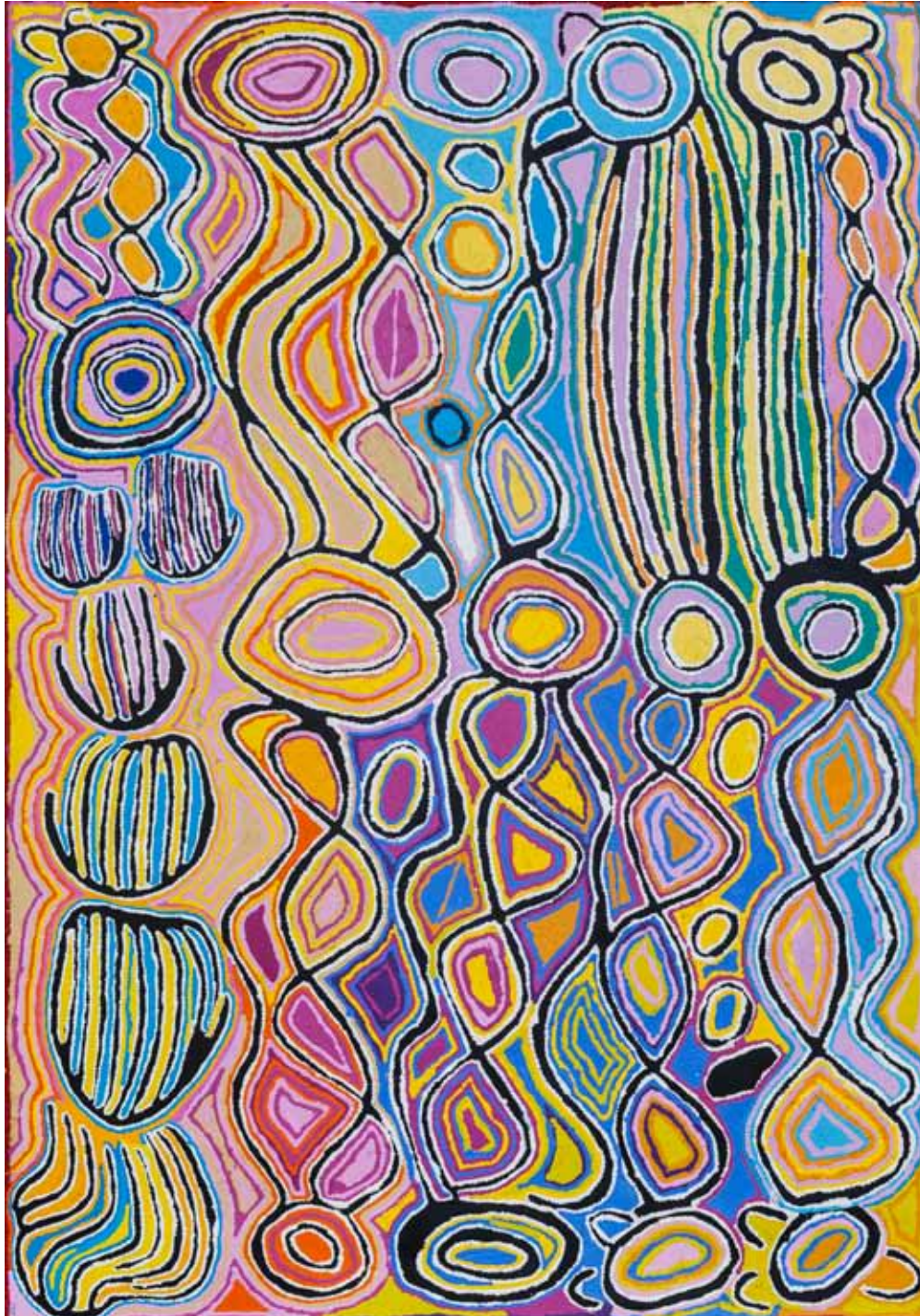
Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves (above and gallery installation, opposite)
Acrylic on Canvas
2009
204 x 147 cm

JUDY NAPANGARDI WATSON

What distinguishes Australian desert art from other regions is the lack of naturalistic representations. Narrative is expressed through conventional symbols using a prescribed repertoire of imagery. Its distinction from other contemporary work is its basis in ancient tradition and the artists' relationship to the land. Yet what sets apart art and craft painters from the outstanding artists that originate from the desert regions is their resourcefulness and imagination in creating new ways to represent ancient stories.



Women's ceremonies are the subject of Judy Napangardi Watson's works in this exhibition. Watson is among Warlukurlangu Artists' (Yuendumu, N.T.) most well known and successful artists. This elder's (b. circa 1925) work is like no other – renowned for her abstract rendering and dynamic use of vivid colour, Watson is considered to be at the forefront of a move towards abstraction whilst her work retains strong connections to her country – Mina Mina. Mina Mina is situated west of Yuendumu and is significant to Watson and other Napangardi and Napanangka women, who are the custodians of the Dreaming that created the area. The Dreaming describes the journey of a group of women who travelled east gathering bush food, collecting Ngalyipi (snake vine) and performing ceremonies as they travelled to sacred sites along the way. Ngalyipi is a sacred vine and is a main component of these works. It is used as a ceremonial wrap, to carry parrajas laden with bush tucker and it is also a tonic for headaches. Texture and colour are integral components of desert art and Watson's signature 'dot and drag' brushwork using undiluted acrylic creates a visual texture which evokes the physical and spiritual fertility of the land and the radiance of being that is sought in ceremony.



Judy Napangardi Watson
Mina Mina Jukurrpa - Ngalyipi
Acrylic on Belgian Linen
2012
152 x 107 cm



Gallery Installation View:

Judy Napangardi Watson
Mina Mina Jukurrpa - Ngalyipi
Acrylic on Belgian Linen
2012
152 x 107 cm;
Chinese Scholar's Rock



Judy Napangardi Watson
Mina Mina Jukurrpa - Ngalyipi
Acrylic on Belgian Linen
2012
91 x 76 cm

ARTISTS' & CURATOR'S BIOGRAPHIES



BETTY MBITJANA

Born Alaphere, Utopia, Northern Territory, Australia, c. 1954

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Desert Spirit Rock*, Australian Desert Artists and Chinese Scholar's Rocks, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2012 *Les Guerriers Chromatiques*, Sascha Gianella Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1990 *A Picture Story: 88 works on silk from the Holmes à Court Collection*, Eire & Scotland

COLLECTIONS

Holmes à Court Collection, Western Australia

PUBLICATIONS

Kreczmanski, Janusz B & Birnberg, Margo. *Aboriginal Artists: Dictionary of Biographies: Central Desert, Western Desert & Kimberley Region*, J.B. Publishing, Marlestone, South Australia, 2004.

Brody, Annemarie & Gooch, Rodney. *Utopia : a picture story : 88 silk batiks from the Robert Holmes à Court Collection in association with CAAMA/ Utopia Artists in Residence Project* (1st : 1990 : Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, W.A.); portrait photographs by Nicholas Adler. Heytesbury Holdings Ltd. for the Robert Holmes à Court Collection, Perth, 1990.



JEANNIE PETYARRE (PITJARA)

Born Utopia, Northern Territory, Australia, c.1957

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Desert Spirit Rock*, Australian Desert Artists and Chinese Scholar's Rocks, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2012 *Les Guerriers Chromatiques*, Sascha Gianella Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2008 redrock gallery, A Women's Exhibition, Beijing, China
- 2007 redrock gallery, Beijing, China
- 2006 redrock gallery, Melbourne
- Annual Clear Lake Exhibition of Aboriginal Paintings, Houston, USA
- Cicada Trading, Paris, France
- Cicada Trading, Bahrain Art Society, Kingdom of Bahrain
- Cicada Trading, Abu Dhabi & Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2005 Cicada Trading, Milano, Italy
- 2005 Cicada Trading, Istanbul, Turkey
- 1993 Central Australian Aboriginal Art & Craft Exhibition, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs, NT.
- 1990 *A Picture Story: 88 works on silk from the Holmes à Court Collection*, Eire & Scotland

COLLECTIONS

The Art Gallery of NSW, Australia
The National Gallery of Australia, ACT
The Holmes à Court Collection, WA



GLORIA TAMERRE PETYARRE

Born Atnangkere Soakage, Northern Territory, Australia, 1945

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2005 Gallery Savah, Sydney
- 2003 Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1999 Recent Paintings, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1998 Utopia Art, Sydney
- 1998 Robert Steele Gallery, Adelaide
- 1997 New Directions, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1996 Fire Works Gallery, Brisbane

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Desert Spirit Rock*, Australian Desert Artists and Chinese Scholar's Rocks, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2012 *Les Guerriers Chromatiques*, Sascha Gianella Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2010 *Desert Rhythms*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2008 *Utopia Revisited*, NG Art Gallery, Chippendale, New South Wales
- 2007 *New Works from Utopia*, Space Gallery, Pittsburgh, PA, USA
- 2006 *Desert Diversity*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- Utopia*, Australian Embassy, Washington, USA
- Utopia in New York*, Robert Steele Gallery, New York, USA
- Utopia*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2004 *Utopia: Gloria, Barbara, Minnie*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 2002 *The Utopia Six*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1999 Wynne Prize exhibition. Winning entry
- Quadrivium* Gallery, Sydney
- Bush Garden*, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle, Western Australia
- Utopia*, BMG Art, Adelaide
- 1998 The Adelaide Festival Theatre, South Australia
- The Atnangkere Growth Paintings - First Release*, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- SCEGGS Redlands Art Award, Sydney
- The Ladies of Utopia*, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- Utopia IV*, Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
- Utopia*, Works on Paper, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- Paintings from Utopia*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- ARATEXPO New York in association with Mandurah Ltd., New York
- Women Painters of the Desert*, Fire Works Gallery, Brisbane
- The Importance of Ochre*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- 1997 Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane

- 1997 *Utopia Art*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
 Selected entrant in the Telstra 14th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award
 Dreamings of the Desert, Artist in residence programme, Art Gallery of South Australia
 Dacou Gallery, Adelaide
 Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
- 1996 *Recent Paintings From Utopia*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
 Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
 Framed, Darwin
- 1995 Dacou Gallery, Adelaide
- 1990 *Utopia Artists*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne

COLLECTIONS

The British Museum, United Kingdom
The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Allen, Allen & Helmsley, Sydney
Victorian State Museum, Australia
Museum & Art Galleries of the Northern Territories, Australia
Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queenslan
Robert Holmes à Court Collection
Adelaide Festival Centre Collection, South Australia
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Baker-McKenzie, Sydney
Campbelltown City Art Gallery, New South Wales
Flinders University, South Australia
Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
Griffith University Collection, New South Wales
Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria
Museum of Victoria, Melbourne
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia
Queensland Art Gallery, Australia
Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Riddoch Art Gallery, S.A.
Supreme Court, Brisbane, Australia
University of New South Wales, Australia
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, U.S.A.
Westpac Bank Corporate Collection, New York
James D. Wolfensohn Collection
Woollongong City Art Gallery, Australia
Woollongong University Collection, Australia
Macquarie Bank, Australia
University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland
Singapore Art Museum, Singapore

AWARDS

- 2004 Wynne Prize for Landscape Painting, Highly Commended
- 1999 Wynne Prize for Landscape Painting, Winner
- 1993 Design for tapestry for Victorian Tapestry Workshop
- 1993 Mural for Kansas City Zoo



JUDY NAPANGARDI WATSON

Born Tanami Desert, Northern Territory, Australia, c. 1925

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2005 Karnta Jukurrpa, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- 2004 Judy Napangardi Watson, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Desert Spirit Rock*, Australian Desert Artists and Chinese Scholar's Rocks, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing, China
- 2012 *Les Guerriers Chromatiques*, Sascha Gianella Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2005 *Yilpinji, Love, Magic and Ceremony*, Galerie DAD, Mantes-la-Jolie, France
- 2004 *New Paintings by Judy Napangardi Watson And Betsy Napangardi Lewis*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- All about art*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- Colour Power - Aboriginal Art Post 1984*, National Gallery of Victoria Federation Square, Melbourne
- Australian Aboriginal Art Collector's Exhibition*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
- EXPLAINED*, A closer look at Aboriginal art, Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- 2003 *Colours of Mina Mina*, Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
- 20th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
- 2002 Warlukurlangu Artists Cooperative of Yuendumu, Jeffrey Moose Gallery, Seattle USA
- New Works from Warlukurlangu*, Indigenart, Perth WA
- Warlukurlangu Artists Cooperative of Yuendumu, One Union Square Lobby, Seattle, USA
- New Paintings from Yuendumu*, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London
- Warlukurlangu Collection, Parliament House, Canberra
- 2000 jangku yinyi, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Melbourne; Beaver Galleries, Canberra
- Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle
- Kurawari*, Desert Gallery, Sydney
- Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
- Marking the Paper*, Desert Gallery, Sydney
- Journey to the North West*, Palya Art, Sydney
- Wayuta*, The Desert Janganpa Gallery, Alice Springs
- 1999 *Watch This Space*, International Women's Day Exhibition, Alice Springs
- Desert Mob Show*, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs
- Mina Mina*, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney
- 1998 Art Gallery Culture Store, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- A Thousand Journeys*, Tin Shed Gallery, University of Sydney
- Kurrawarri - Kirli*, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

- 1998 Framed Gallery, Darwin
Desert Designs, Perth
- 1997 Hogarth Gallery, Sydney
- 1995 SOFA, Miami, U.S.A
SOFA, Chicago, U.S.A
Bellas Gallery, Brisbane
- 1994 Armstrong Gallery, Florida
Power of the Land, Masterpieces of Aboriginal Art, National Gallery of Victoria
Echoes of the Dreamtime, Osaka, Japan
- 1993 Adelaide Town Hall, (in association with The Pacific Arts Symposium)
Bella's Gallery, Brisbane
Northern Territory Art Award, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs
Sutton Gallery, Melbourne; CINAPE (Chicago International New Art Forms Exposition), U.S.A.
- 1992 The Long Gallery, Hobart
Hogarth Gallery of Dreams, Sydney
- 1991 Darwin Performing Arts Centre, Darwin
- 1990 Darwin Performing Arts Centre, Darwin
I.U.N.C. (showing at Hilton Hotel), Perth
Women's Exhibition, The Women's Gallery, Melbourne

COMMISSIONS

Janganpa / Mawurriji Jukurrpa (Native Possum & Mawurriji Dreaming), Foyer of The Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra

COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht
Gordon Darling Foundation, Canberra
Flinders University Art Museum, Melbourne
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
National Gallery of Victoria
South Australian Museum, Adelaide
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

PUBLICATIONS

Australian National University Crossing Cultures: Art from the Boxer Collection. ANU, Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra 2000
Morphy, H. *Aboriginal Art*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1998.
Morphy, H. and Boles, M.S. (eds.) *Art from the land* University of Virginia Press, Virginia, U.S.A., 1999.
Ryan, Judith (editor), *Colour Power - Aboriginal Art Post 1984*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004 (C).
Birnberg & Kreczmanski, *Aboriginal Artists dictionary of biographies*, JB Publishing, (C)



SASCHA GIANELLA

EDUCATION

2007 - 2008	French Intensif DELF, Ifage, Geneva, Switzerland.
2004	AutoCAD Fundamentals, KariCAD, Sydney.
2001	Strategic Selling, Heiman Miller, Phuket, Thailand.
2000	Professional Selling Skills, Heiman Miller, KL, Malaysia. Advanced Diploma, Interior Architecture, S.I.T., Sydney.
1999	Arts Administration Traineeship, Teame, Sydney.
1998	TAFE Statement, Business Services, S.I.T., Sydney. Certificate II, Business (Office Admin.), Sydney Institute of Technology (S.I.T.), Sydney.
1996 - 1997	Post Graduate Diploma of Arts Management, UTS, Sydney.
1995	Certificate, Keyboarding Applications & Office Procedures, Tafe, Sydney.
1993 - 1995	Bachelor of Arts, UNSW, Sydney (Majors: French, Sociology, Art History).

ASSOCIATIONS

2013 to present	Committee Member, aparté, Association for the Promotion of Emerging Artists, Switzerland
2007 - 2012	Member, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
2006	Board Member & Events Coordinator, National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Vice President, Contempo, Art Gallery NSW
2004-2005	Board Member & Secretary, National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Committee Member, Contempo, Art Gallery NSW
2001	Member, Property Council of Australia
2000	Member, Facilities Management Australia (FMA)

CAREER

2008 to date	CURATOR & ADVISOR	Sascha Gianella Art Contemporain Sàrl, Geneva, Switzerland
2002-2007	CURATOR & ADVISOR	ARTTYSON, Sydney
2006-2007	DIRECTOR	urban source, Sydney
2004-2006	CLIENT MANAGER	Charter Build, Sydney
2002-2004	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	BBR Design, Sydney
1997-2002	GALLERY MANAGER	Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney
1992-1993	GALLERY ASSISTANT	Medici Galleries, London, U.K.

PROJECT & VOLUNTEER WORK

1997	PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR	Sculpture by the Sea, Sydney.
	GALLERY ASSISTANT	Annandale Galleries, Sydney.
	GALLERY ASSISTANT	Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Sydney.

GALLERY ASSISTANT	Newcastle Region Art Gallery, Newcastle.
ASSISTANT	Australian Commercial Galleries Association, Sydney, NSW.
MARKETING ASSISTANT	National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
RESEARCHER	Australian Commercial Galleries Association, Sydney, NSW.

1996

GALLERY ASSISTANT	William Mora Galleries, Melbourne.
GALLERY ASSISTANT	Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Melbourne.
GALLERY ASSISTANT	William Mora Galleries, Mary Place Gallery, Sydney.

INDEPENDENT CURATORIAL WORK

2014	<i>Desert Spirit Rock</i> , Australian Desert Artists and Chinese Scholar's Rocks, Atkins & Ai Gallery, Beijing, China, Jan - May 2014
2012	<i>Les Guerriers Chromatiques</i> , NEST, Geneva, Switzerland, March 2012
2011	<i>La mémoire des ruines</i> , Aurélien Bergot, SGAC online, Sep 2011
	<i>Rémanence</i> , Sarah Girard, SGAC online, July 2011
	Claudia Imbert, SGAC online, June 2011
	<i>Liquid Ground</i> , Helen Pynor, SGAC online, May 2011
	<i>Displace Realities</i> , Ayoung Kim, SGAC online, April 2011
	Kumaresan, Selveraj, SGAC online, March 2011
2009	<i>Urban Reflections</i> , Dorothée Baumann, Aurélien Bergot, Sarah Girard, The Art Floor, Geneva, Mar 2009
2008	<i>tendences I</i> contemporary artists in review 2008, The Art Floor, Geneva, Switzerland, Dec 2008
	<i>Les artistes Warlpiri: l'expression de la terre</i> , The Art Floor, Geneva, Switzerland, Sep 2008
	<i>Les couleurs du désert australien</i> , Antidote, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2008
	<i>Les artistes du désert australien</i> , private viewing, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2008
2000	<i>Sculpture 2000</i> , Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Australia, January 2000
1997	<i>Lineage (Shards of Glass)</i> , Mary Place Gallery, Australia, Gail Joy Kenning.

PRESS

2011	Visuellement Bruyant. espaces contemporains Magazine, Switzerland, Aurélien Bergot, Oct 2011
2011	Aurélien Bergot rouvre la Salle Crosnier. Tribune de Genève, Switzerland. Etienne Dumont, Sep, 2011
2009	Marketing Erudit, PROFIL Magazine, Switzerland, Laure Croset, June 2009
2008	Les artistes Walpirri, COTE Magazine, Switzerland. November 2008
2000	Sculpture 2000 at Access Contemporary Art Gallery, Peter Harris, World Sculpture News, Volume 6, No.1

WRITING

2012	Externalisations of the Mind, Chinwook Kim (KR). catalogue essay for Oriental VisArt, May
2012	Between Tiers. Heo Wook (KR), catalogue essay for Oriental VisArt, January
2011	Neon Plants, Night Lights and Travel to the Galaxy. Hyungji Park (KR),), catalogue essay for Oriental VisArt, May
2011	Displaced Realities. Ayoung Kim (KR), James Chen-Feng Kao (TW/US), Ma Hongjie (CN), catalogue essay for Oriental VisArt, March
2011	The Space Between. Kumaresan Selveraj(IN), Can Kang(CN), Wook Heo(KR), catalogue essay for Oriental VisArt, January
2010	Les Limites du Pouvoir , Aurélien Bergot (CH) - Works 2009-2010, catalogue essay for solo exhibition as part of the Manifestation d'Art Contemporain de Genève 2010
2009	Severed Vision. The art of Stéphane Ducret. NY Arts Magazine, New York, October issue
1997	Sculpture by the Sea: A Feasibility Report, Formed part of Bathtub Productions application to SOCOG for inclusion in the Olympics Arts Festival
1997	The Australian Commercial Galleries Association: An Approach to Marketing, for Merryn Carter, of Carter & Associates on behalf of the ACGA



Gallery Installation Views:
画廊现场一览

The Gesture of Indigenous Australian Artists (above)
Calligraphy by Denis Brown and Ma Tianbo
Ink on upper Gallery Wall
澳大利亚土著艺术家标志 (上)
Denis Brown 与马天博书法
画廊二层墙壁水墨作品

HXL：现今的世界已经完全不同。您的客户与收藏家们想找的是什么样的作品？新手买家又应该注意哪些问题？

SG：我建议通过声誉良好的画商和艺术中心购买画作。要辨别好作品，必须能够看出艺术家是否能以文化承载和艺术价值兼备的方式，成功描绘主题，而这必须经过一番训练！要长期观察某一名艺术家的大量作品，才能辨识出这位艺术家的独特之处，以及什么才称得上是好作品。画商或艺术中心在这方面独具优势。

此外，由于市场上充斥赝品与劣质作品，因此，画作的来源相当重要。所有拍卖行都对来源十分小心，只承拍经过百分之百确认的作品。

更重要的是，要跟有良心的画商合作。艺术家理应获得合理的报酬与待遇，收藏家也应该有保障，保证他们是以市价买到真迹，并应向他们提供证书，证实作品确属真迹。

HXL：我们可以用当代艺术的框架来评估并讨论原住民艺术吗？

SG：可以的。这次参展的艺术家以及所有澳洲艺术家，都是在当下、此时此地创作作品，不论他们住在哪里、有什么经验或具备何等传承，每个人所创作的都是与过去截然不同的当代作品。

HXL：刚刚开始学习欣赏画作的人，是否应该留意与原住民艺术制作与流通相关的道德议题？

SG：是的。画商与原住民艺术交易商扮演了重要角色，确保原住民艺术与文化受到尊重与欣赏，而非剥削。我们有责任与客户与更广大的社群建立关系，确保我们在展出或推广原住民艺术时，确实尊重了艺术家本身的意愿和限制，并体认原住民对国家与文化所承担的责任与相互关系。

HXL：原住民艺术按照其自己的轨道和系统发展。您对原住民艺术界（策展人、艺术家、批评家、画廊、收藏家、艺术中心、拍卖公司）走向国际有何评价？还有什么欠缺的工作需要开展？

SG：好消息是目前已有许多才华横溢、博学 and 热忱的人投入原住民艺术界的工作，将它推向国际舞台。

不过还是存在一些问题。首先，市场中有很多劣质作品和赝品。这一问题似乎太大，难以控制。另一个问题是，许多业界人士与当代艺术收藏家，在看待原住民艺术时的观念过于欧洲取向——认为这属于民俗艺术、原始艺术或者是部落艺术，而无法进入当代艺术的范畴。这是一个需要教育的问题。2008 年悉尼双年展策展人 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev 刚到澳大利亚时，跟一般人一样认为原住民艺术只会在民族志学方面引起兴趣，但在花了很多时间与艺术家和社群相处之后，她的观念彻底转变。她主张民族志学的曲解不断在扭曲世人对原住民艺术的观感，因而极力提倡原住民艺术并宣扬这种艺术对当代艺术界的重大贡献。

HXL：就您个人而言，这次参展作品何以具有高度收藏价值？

SG：除了撷取文化传承之外，每位参展艺术家都在艺术自由上具备鲜明的个人色彩，并拥有卓越的实验与创新能力，他们的作品在同辈中独树一帜，在国际当代绘画的格局下，实力极为强劲。所有参展艺术家都广受收藏家与策展人欢迎，具有非常高的人气。

2013 年 10 月 28 日

HXL：在中国，我们发现各界正在重新燃起对传统的兴趣，并因此带动了传统艺术形式的创新，尤其是水墨画特别流行。有的年轻艺术家会说，在他们身上贴上中国艺术的标签实在没有道理，因为他们画的就只是他们自己的画作。另一方面，也有一些艺术家对自己的传统具有高度意识，认为自己选择的是秉承特有的中国意识去作画——藉此代表或反映自己的血统。

SG：我认为原住民艺术家也有同样的状况。

我们为这次展览所选出的艺术家，都表达了特定的精神意义，讲述的是一个特定民族的故事。另一方面也有其他艺术家（多数来自都会地区），在种族与文化上认同原住民，但艺术形式却明显偏向西方或世界性的风格，例如 Tracey Moffatt。她自认为当代澳大利亚艺术家，由于原住民艺术通常会让人联想起来自偏远乡间的点画，因此许多艺术家希望外界用对非原住民艺术家一样的眼光看待他们。

HXL：我们是否可以说，原住民艺术家似乎较不关注个人层次，而偏好追求超越所有个人层次之上的永恒？

SG：我想他们非常关心个人层次。每个原住民都与一种或多种“梦”相关联，虽然他们可能会与族群中其他成员拥有相同的“梦”，但是如何选择表现“梦”的方式是每个艺术家的自由，艺术家有发展个人风格的自由。

还有很多艺术家在艺术作品中讲述独有的个人故事，例如 Queenie McKenzie，她那纯粹、线性与抽象的美学，虽然在 Warmun（Warmun）艺术家当中相当常见，但她非常喜欢画出自己的故事。她曾有一幅画作，画的是某一次 Rover Thomas 从马背上摔下，而她自己帮他缝好头皮伤口的故事。

同样，日本首都拥挤的交通也曾成为 Rover Thomas 1996 年的作品——“东京十字路口”（Tokyo Crossroads）——的创作源泉，这也是他最具有意象特色的作品之一。虽然使用了传统的赭色，还有金伯利（Kimberley）东部绘画及版画著名的极简风格，这幅极富象征意义的作品再次确立了 Thomas 独有的视角，以及身为当代澳大利亚艺术家的身份认同感。

HXL：这些艺术家作画的过程是什么样子？

SG：这次参展的艺术家，都是在社群团体或艺术中心制作作品。艺术中心的合作对澳大利亚原住民艺术的崛起非常重要。

艺术家在团体中共同作画，身边常有不同世代的家族或社群成员，还有他们养的狗。这是一种社交活动。

所有艺术家都有不同的画风，但很多人都是先设定主要意象，然后用大胆的色块与色点填满几何形图案。

HXL：引进压克力颜料和画布之后，他们的画法有何改变？

SG：对一般群众来说，艺术是画来卖的。这种做法有其正面之处，也就是说在艺术中心做画是一种社会实践——年轻一代可以在旁观看并学习，而且这种作法也鼓励所有人参与。澳大利亚各地有许多社群已不再举行仪式及庆典，因此我敢说，如果没有艺术中心，或许很多原住民文化、知识及遗产都会消失，而且会极其迅速地消失。

HXL：你觉得他们以后会更勇于尝试新素材吗？

SG：数十年来，已有许多原住民艺术家实验过新素材。随手举几个例子：Fiona Foley、Judy Watson、Tracey Moffatt、Danie Mellor、Destiny Deacon、Marianne Riphagen 和 Dennis Nonna 尝试过电影、表演艺术以及各种混合媒介。原住民艺术家 Vernon Ah Kee 的装置作品，甚至曾代表澳大利亚参加 2009 年威尼斯双年展。这些艺术家与本次参展沙漠艺术家的差异，往往在于“画派”训练的差异。许多艺术家不是来自都会中心就是移居到此，上过传授西方与世界绘画技巧的艺术学校。

HXL：您以女性艺术家做为这次展览的焦点，其中有什么特别的原因吗？

SG：其实只是因为沙漠地区有许多女性艺术家发表了质量极高的杰出作品。最开始时，原住民艺术运动以男性为主，但二十世纪八十年代人类学家开始鼓励沙漠地区的女性画出自己的“梦”。女性被允许作画，只是不能使用具有宗教礼仪意义的赭色、黄色、黑色与白色。讽刺的是，正因为用色与处理手法自由，反而使女性艺术家推动了原住民艺术的发展，使之成为澳大利亚艺术史上规模最大的运动之一。

HXL：您提到这次有几位参展者跟知名艺术家有关系。就原住民艺术作品的价值而言，血统的重要性有多高？

SG：血统并不能成就一位伟大的艺术家。然而在原住民社会中，氏族身分确实有很大的影响。一个人可以通过获取知识来取得地位，知识是透过成年礼获得的，然而声望却只能通过年纪累积。因此，年长者有能力画出某一主题的各种面向，这是年轻与未履行成年礼的艺术家力不能及的，如此一来他们的作品常在神圣设计的表现上获得极高评价，作品的价值也随之而来。

SG: 当代艺术所认定的创新与实验, 以及艺术中心所鼓励的做法, 是要发展出具有高度个人主义的风格。因此即便某位艺术家表达某个指定的主题之梦, 例如“水梦”(Water Dreaming) 这一被许多艺术家共同使用的主题——趣味之处在于每位艺术家会如何呈现自己的故事。有人可能会通过暴风雨来表达, 其他人则可能采用水滴的形状, 或是有一弯流水流经的大片原野。艺术界感兴趣的是真伪, 但在技巧和风格方面却追求个人主义。

HXL: 有哪些重要的创新之举吗?

SG: 点画的手法就是其中之一。点画于二十世纪七十年代起源于帕潘雅图拉(Papunva Tula), 目的是隐藏西部沙漠原住民的传统视觉语言。为了隐藏深层的精神与象征意义, 后来绘制的图画都加入了创新与复杂性, 现在也因此备受重视。本次展览中有三幅 Gloria Tamerre Petyarre 的作品。她因笔触特殊而成为澳大利亚最著名的艺术家之一。Petyarre 画的是药草之梦(Dreaming of Bush Medicine Leaves), 利用画笔末端画出代表叶片的记号。她的画作中充满呈漩涡状的灌木叶片, 给观者一种流动的感觉。这种技法现已广为模仿, 且备受全球收藏家及策展人所崇尚。

另一位创新性十足的艺术家是 Judy Watson (这次也有参展)。她的创新在于用色与众不同且充满迷幻风格。Judy 还使用了一种独特的点画及拖曳技巧, 作画过程中画笔完全不离画布表面。有人说这种作画方式, 类似女性仪式中女性用脚在沙地上拖曳的方式。

HXL: 二十世纪七十年代以前的创新和实验又是何种风貌呢?

SG: 在二十世纪七十年代以前, 大众对原住民艺术的印象仅止于“树皮画”、器物、石画或石刻。二十世纪四十年代期间, 树皮画开始受到收藏家欢迎, 因而大量生产贩卖。从原住民的角度来说, 最基本的考虑之一就是如何让树皮画从原始、枯燥的状态, 变得明亮又精致。结果是透过视觉密度, 或“miny’ tji”, 或交叉网状的氏族设计, 在使用白色网图案的过程中堆栈上一层层色彩, 来达到这个目的。这种效果的目的是呈现“视觉微光”(visual shimmer), 让绘画的概念融合在仪式的背景之中, 画家借此希望观者用感觉而非视觉去感受画作的设计, 因为这毕竟都是超自然祖灵力量的象征。

在西方艺术的脉络之下, 二十世纪七十年代以前最具实验性的原住民艺术家应该算是 Albert Namatjira (1902-1959), 他至今仍被视为澳大利亚有史以来最杰出的艺术家之一。他以澳大利亚内陆沙漠景致为主题的水彩作品, 源于路德教会传教士在澳大利亚中部创立的原住民艺术赫曼斯堡画派(Hermannsburg School)。Namatjira 在那里遇见了澳大利亚水彩画家 Rex Batterbee, 后者不但向 Namatjira 传授了西方绘画技巧, 还协助他举办了第一次画展。这个画派明显以西方风格为主, 远远背离了传统原住民的设计与记号标示法。

HXL: 中部沙漠地区艺术家的“梦”与作品有何独特之处?

SG: 沙漠艺术的独特之处在于, 它仅仅是地理地形与传统习俗的单纯反映。

当地原住民所画的意象, 与其特有的“梦”和国家有关。他们偏好特定的传统组合式结构和图像表征。沙漠艺术的意象通常包含了同心圆等各种象征, 用来代表水源、圣地、火或巢穴; 半圆代表女性, 短线条代表掘土的棍棒, 箭头则代表动物出没的小径。象征符号的数量很多, 多数都具有多重意义。

HXL: 你和这些艺术家相处过一段时间。你觉得跟他们对话最有趣的地方在哪里?

SG: 长者们——其中很多都超过八十岁——亲手绘制的画作, 有一种与某种力量和谐共振之感, 而这种力量多半在年轻艺术家身上才能发现, 我觉得这一点极为迷人且具有启发性。画布上的色彩跃然欲出, 线条用笔如行云流水, 巧妙隐藏了背后的秘密以及画作的主题。这些艺术家是移民到来之前, 在传统土地上过着自给自足生活的末代原住民, 因此, 能有机会跟这些艺术家相处实在是特别荣幸。

HXL: 这次展览你最喜欢的作品是哪幅?

SG: 我没有最喜欢的作品。这些作品均是因其独特性而入选, 并且忠于这次展览的主题——色彩与实验。

HXL: 西方艺术史的特点在于各种画派及风格的兴衰。相较之下, 中国艺术展现了某种程度的延续性, 并且直到末代王朝之前, 都具有延续传统的集体意识——现在我们又看到原来的传统正以崭新的面貌卷土重来。你觉得是什么造就了原住民艺术中如此强烈的延续性?

SG: 原住民艺术的延续性如此强烈的原因, 在于它并不只是“艺术”——因此在这个脉络下并不适用西方的艺术概念。原住民艺术是一种生活方式, 是一种表达生活的方式, 而且正如我前面所解释, 它本质上是一种与“梦”有关的表达方式——原住民如何看待生命、自己在生命中的地位, 还有生命的起源, 都是以“梦”为基础。与所有宗教一样, 它是原住民信仰系统的基石, 整个文化与社会都围绕着它而建立, 有了它才能继续生存。“延续性”来自于原住民保存自己文化的动力和需求。

访谈录

SASCHA GIANELLA 和 MICHELLE HO 何晓箬

何晓箬, Michelle Ho (HXL): 为什么您认为现在是将澳大利亚原住民艺术引进中国的好时机?

Sascha Gianella (SG): 过去三十年来, 中国经济增长惊人, 中国人除购买力之外, 还获得了受教育的机会, 不但有能力负担艺术投资, 也愿意追求这样一种生活型态。中国人民开始积极了解自己国家和其他国家的历史与文化身份认同。中国人移居澳大利亚已有一段历史 (澳大利亚人移居中国亦是如此), 他们来此追求教育、通商、文化和各种机会, 这影响了中国人对澳大利亚及其历史的了解。原住民艺术运动被认为是澳大利亚艺术史上最重要的事件, 许多原住民艺术家已成为艺术界家喻户晓的名字, 被认为具有极高的收藏价值。中国收藏家自然不会对此置若罔闻。

HXL: 从艺术风格或内容而言, 您认为澳大利亚原住民艺术的哪些特色足以吸引中国观众?

SG: 中国与澳大利亚都拥有悠久的历史文化遗产, 因此我相信, 中国人或许会对体认并尊重两种文化之间的异同深感兴趣。举例来说, 1989 年起中国艺术家周小平便移居澳大利亚, 与当地原住民共同生活了好几年。他们对周小平的作品与哲学造成了深刻影响。原住民对土地的感情让他深深着迷——他对自己的祖国中国也有同样的感觉, 并将这种情感表现在自己的作品中。他还发现, 原住民艺术家所呈现的线条与意象与中国书法相当类似。不只表现手法相近, 两者都利用符号将事物化繁为简。受这一发现的鼓舞, 他开始更深入地探索澳洲原住民文化, 进而发现原住民 (尤其是他的合作伙伴 Jimmy Pike) 不但使他自身的艺术迈入自由之境, 而且大大解放了他看待自身艺术的态度。

HXL: 您提到意象这点相当有趣, 因为中国字的原型, 原本就是由象形文字或某种符号演变而来。

SG: 澳洲原住民艺术作品中的意象与符号, 是一种神圣的语言。这类艺术作品一度仅限于树皮画、石刻, 或者是画在雕塑、器物或祭品上的符号。历史上, 非原住民曾尝试将这些神圣意象与人物转换成另一种形式, 以便向更广大的群众展示; 最后, 长者们决定简化——与此同时隐藏艺术作品中的神圣特质。采用点画 (dot painting) 技巧, 是因为必须隐藏画中的象征性元素, 使未履行成年礼的人无法辨识色点底下的神圣象征意义。新的意象与符号也是为了同一目的而创造。

HXL: 那么原住民是如何将神圣的意象与符号传递下去 (在已履行成年礼的人之间)? 他们是否为自身作画时采取一种方式, 为大众作画时采取另一种方式?

SG: 传统上, 原住民从来不为艺术而艺术。我们看到的艺术作品是为大众而创作的。艺术是一种表达文化的方式。沙漠艺术家的艺术作品——或者说那些被我们称为艺术作品的东西——都是画在身体上或沙漠里的沙地上。一旦仪式结束, 他们就洗去涂在身上的赭色, 沙画也会被抹去或随着风、雨或时间而消失。这种传统设计现仍用于节庆或宗教仪式, 而那些转换到画布上的作品, 虽然也参考了神圣的知识, 但主要是从市场的角度而制造的。

信息透过文字、故事、艺术与舞蹈, 口口相传, 代代相承。原住民藉此理解“梦” (Dreaming)、土地、圣地, 学习捕猎与采集, 以及如何透过观察、倾听和行动来找寻水源。在英国殖民时期之前, 澳大利亚最多有六百个操不同语言的原住民族群。每一种语言都有自己的律法、风俗与圣地。各族之间常有接触, 进行通商、分享物资并参与各种庆典与仪式, 相互传递故事与讯息。这解释了为何不同原住民族群的文化有很多相似元素。而且原住民儿童并非仅仅由父母抚养, 他们的阿姨、姑姑、叔叔或舅舅也会参与抚养, 他们与兄弟姐妹和表亲们关系紧密。有些讯息, 直到孩子们成年时才会传递给他们, 这一点被认为相当重要。这些讯息透过成人礼传递下去。

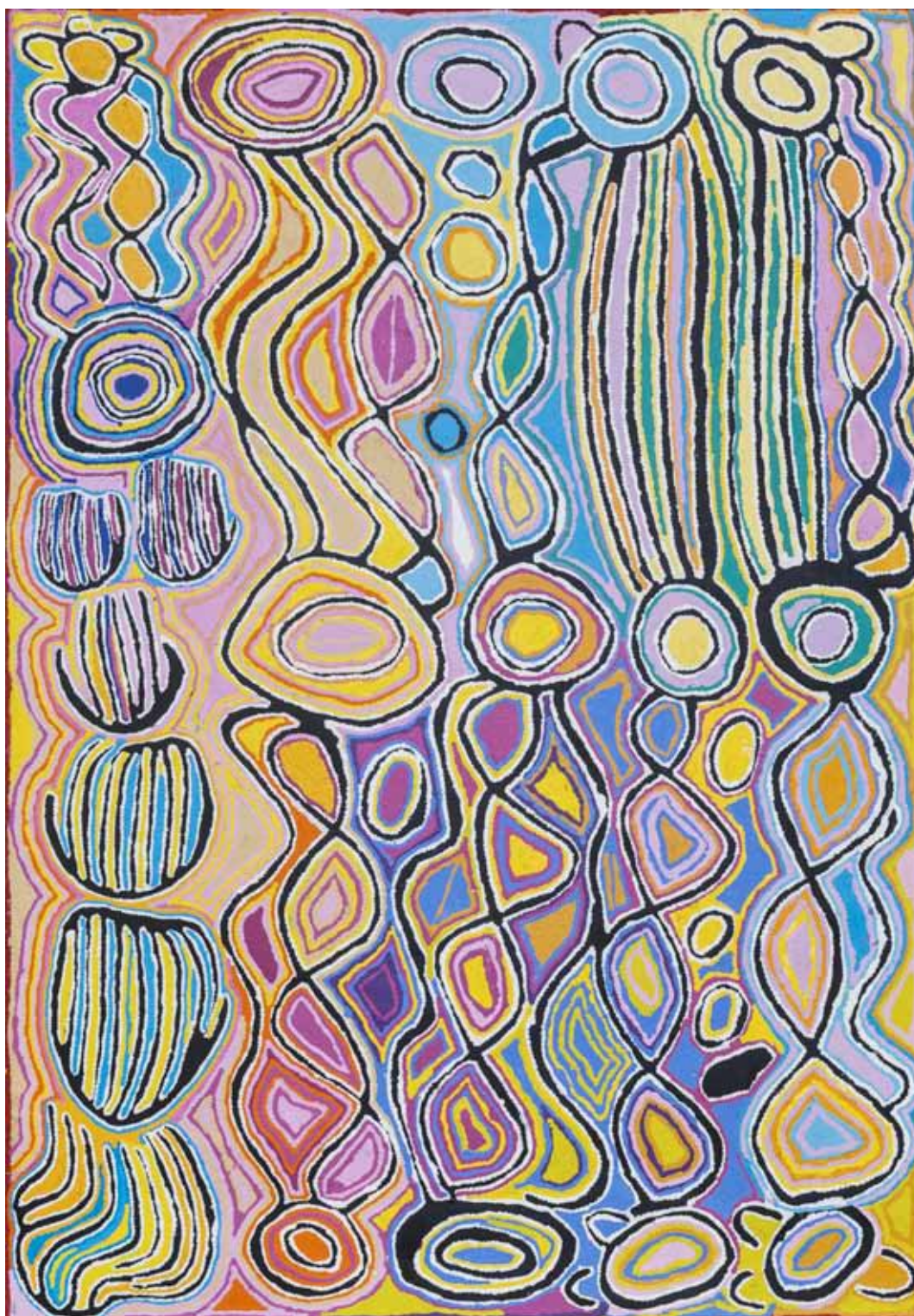
自首批移民抵达之后, 已有多少原住民知识佚失, 我们无法得知。然而, 原住民正努力向下一代传递目前尚存的讯息——而艺术就是其中的一种媒介。

HXL: 原住民语言中有代表艺术或艺术作品的字眼吗?

SG: 原住民语言中没有代表“艺术”这个名词的字眼。

每个族群都有代表“设计与庆典”的字眼。以瓦尔皮瑞 (Walpiri) 为例, 男性的设计与庆典称为 Kuruwarri。女性的设计与庆典则称为 Yawulyu。在阿纳姆地 (Arnhem Land) 中部与东北部, Miny' tji 这个字则代表某个氏族专属的图案或设计。

HXL: 您曾提到这次参展的艺术家都是创新与实验的先驱?



Judy Napangardi Watson
Mina Mina Jukurrpa - Ngalyipi
比利时亚麻布面丙烯
Acrylic on Belgian Linen
2012
152 x 107 cm

前言

SASCHA GIANELLA



澳大利亚土著艺术是世界上延续至今的最古老的艺术传统。土著艺术的最初表现形式是通过石刻，人体彩绘以及地面设计来实现的，其历史可以追溯到三万多年前。如今的澳大利亚土著艺术，其质量与种类，反映了土著文化的丰富和多样性，同时也揭示了部落，语言，方言以及地形风貌之间的明显差异。艺术一直是原住民生活中重要的一部分，艺术联接着过去和现在，人类和土地，超自然和现实。

此次参展的艺术家们来自澳大利亚最偏僻地区之一的中部沙漠地带。于外界看来，澳大利亚多数的地方都被沙漠覆盖，看起来空虚又荒凉。但对于这些地方的原住民而言，这些由他们的祖先开辟的土地，给予了他们富饶的身体寄托，和饱满的精神内涵。

沙漠地带的与世隔绝状态在 1860 年左右，被欧洲移民们所打破。欧洲移民们对土著文化习俗和社会环境造成了不利影响。原住民被迫从他们的土地撤离，住进了建好的边远站子里，直到 20 世纪 70 年代的联邦政治改革，才允许并鼓励原住民回到他们祖先的土地上居住。原住民委员会建立了合作团体，以缓和艺术家们对传统和文化的顾虑，与外界需求和预期的关系。土著艺术在历史上纯粹是用于满足传统文化需求，之后也或多或少地延续着。在旧时的正式场合，艺术只是创作和展现在特定的认知层面。然则在现代社会，艺术的巨大形态已经出现，并展示在更广阔的公众视野里。

沙漠艺术运动被评价为 20 世纪最重大的艺术运动之一，因为在 1971 年，通过人体或地面彩绘的传统上发展起来的西部沙漠艺术风格产生了巨大变化。那时一名叫做 Geoffrey Bardon (1940 - 2003) 的学校老师，向社区民众介绍了绘画颜料和帆布，许多艺术家们开始利用新兴的西部媒介来改变他们的创作风格。

澳大利亚中部沙漠的艺术家们以他们鲜艳的丙烯画作闻名于世。土著文化的保护和代代沿袭是每个艺术中心使命中不可或缺的部分。艺术中心的每幅画作都有一个与之相联的“梦”，每个艺术中心都有为当地文化的画作归档的重要资源库。

我很高兴能在北京展示特别甄选的澳大利亚土著艺术作品，更开心可以和博学专业的致力于其事业的 Sascha Gianella 合作。Sascha Gianella 在瑞士的日内瓦生活，她在所从事的领域里深受尊敬，并和广大澳大利亚土著艺术区的一些最高层次艺术家们有密切的联系。我们的合作着重于由广袤的澳大利亚中心沙漠地带激发灵感的作品，Gianella 选择了一群享有盛誉的女性原住民艺术家，以及有重要区域起源的作品。正如 Gianella 在和 Michelle Ho 的访谈中说明的，澳大利亚女性原住民艺术家于历史上相对于男性艺术家是处于二流的，总是被交给填充背景或者身体彩绘的任务；不过像男性一样，原住民女性在社会凝聚力上扮演了重要角色，以及这次在 Desert Spirit Rock（沙漠精神石）展中，所展出作品着重于通过对礼节感（Mbitjana 和 Watson）和自然治愈的力量（Jeannie 和 Gloria Tamerre Petyarre）致敬。



捎带一提

我的外祖父，William Edward Simms（对面）
以及，以上，一群当地原住民，
在昆士兰北部地区，澳大利亚，20 世纪 30 年代

此次展览也是为了展现另一千年景观形态——中国供石。供石的扭曲形状像是一边的澳大利亚土著作品，都拥有高象征性非自然的属性；倘若说油画散发着活力，有时充满动力，那供石则注入了思考和深沉的宁谧——是一种鼓舞的写照也是一种自我的反思。供石，部分是自然演化的结果，部分是工匠的打磨，最早是在唐朝（公元 618—907 年）被收集放在书房里，也有更大的放在花园里，但都引起人们对更广阔景观的遐思。最受欢迎的石头是有着尽可能扭曲的形状，以及从高峰到暗窝石洞的影射，还有更重要的是未经人工处理的外观——纹理，线条，几乎毋需雕饰或想太多过程——很大程度上像是书法家展开的长卷，他的工具不仅仅是毛笔，还有他自身与纸卷及精神的糅合。这种不经意间突现的无常强调出传统中国艺术实践的一种重要意象。在中国视觉艺术的历史交织下，供石最早是出现在唐朝中期的国画里，就像古典国画一样，最初的供石画家不为人所知，画作也未曾标注日期。而如今，令人欢喜的是，供石成为了一种当代中国画的特征，吸引了世人目光，被赋予了新的生命与活力，也向技艺卓越的当代艺术家，刘丹，李华弢，曾晓军等人致敬。自然世界带来了艺术家们灵感，不论是广袤的澳大利亚沙漠还是局限下的中国文人雅室，艺术家们也不仅仅是被自然激发了灵感，感谢自然，同时还见识到了大自然去粗取精的鬼斧神工。

题献

EMILY DE WOLFE PETTIT 艾美丽

澳大利亚原住民与我母亲的家庭之间有着一种长久的联系，他们都把自己的生命贡献给了他们深爱的国度。我的外祖父是澳洲大陆东北部深处的一位真正的拓荒者，不过不是在沙漠里，他对丛林密集的热带地区的动植物群的同等残酷程度了如指掌。在近百年的时光里，他还学到了自然中意想不到的延续人类生命的秘诀。从艺术家及欣赏的眼光看来，澳大利亚拥有令人羡慕的自然之美和特别丰富的生物多样性。更有玲珑的光芒，巨大的容量，还有源源不断醉人的芳香。但是，当独自处在如此广阔的土地上时，人的状态不可避免地发生偏移，因为所有的视觉美感和大自然的混合感官会引发心灵上的孤寂和精神上的依恋。我的外祖父的少年时期以至整个成年时期，都是经验丰富的丛林看管者，参与者，守护者，我想他大多时候都是孤独一人，像一位艺术家，尤其是对土地有着深刻认识的原住民艺术家。



在这个年代，向东方发展的，是艺术作品本身。中国的观众们近年来欣赏了越来越多的澳大利亚土著艺术展。2010年的时候，中国美术馆进行了来自澳大利亚沙漠的土著艺术作品展，艺术家们来自澳大利亚的 Papunya 和 Balgo 地区，那次展览是“澳洲猜想”的一部分：中国的澳大利亚文化年——一次多种艺术的节日盛宴，有澳大利亚最优秀的视觉艺术，电影，文学，音乐，舞蹈和新媒体，由当时的澳大利亚驻华大使 Geoff Raby 博士开幕带给欢乐的群众。最近，在 2011 到 2013 年之间，澳大利亚策展人 Gary Proctor 呈现了一次盛大的巡回展“土地~身体（我们的土地，我们的身体）”，在中国上上下下大大小小的博物馆里展出沃伯顿艺术中心的部分收藏作品，这是中国有史以来最大的澳洲艺术展。此外，过去的十年里，澳大利亚和中国的文化往来吸收甚多，中国的艺术家们去到澳大利亚原住民的精神文化中心地带，邂逅创作的灵感。



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre
Bush Medicine Leaves
布面丙烯 Acrylic on Canvas
2009
204 x 147 cm

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沙漠精神石



澳大利亚土著沙漠艺术与中国传统供石群展

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