



| across country
ken hinds cultural collection

Education Kit
Upper Secondary School

Introduction

The Caloundra Regional Art Gallery is proud to present the major exhibition Across Country a selection from the Ken Hinds Cultural Collection. This is the second touring exhibition coordinated by the Gallery from the collection.

Across Country presents a striking example of the opportunities that lie within the collection. Ken has generously provided access to the gallery for curatorial and educational purposes, which on this occasion has led to the involvement of curator Susan McCulloch. This extensive resource has provided Susan the chance to demonstrate the diversity of 20th century Aboriginal art through its different regions and media and draw attention to the crossovers between the various styles.

This Education Kit utilizes excerpts from the Across Country catalogue, written by curator Susan McCulloch. It is recommended that the kit be used together with the catalogue and visit to the exhibition.

Curator's Comments

Susan McCulloch

The Ken Hinds Cultural Collection is one of Australia's most individual and extensive collections of art and other objects. Encyclopedic in nature, and comprising many hidden gems by both well known and more obscure, but equally interesting Australian artists, the focus is largely on works from the 20th century.

Along with collecting the art of Western artists, Hinds developed an interest in Aboriginal art and artifacts. Until the late 1990s Hinds bought his works from the usual gallery and secondary sources and developing a significant collection of 1970s and 80s works from the seminal Papunya school of painting, a large collection of the Hermannsburg school of watercolour paintings, numerous artifacts, and a rich and varied selection of barks, fibre, carving from Arnhem Land and the Tiwi Islands as well as a large number of artifacts.

Around 1999, Hinds was introduced to Alice Springs gallery director Chris Simon from Yanda Aboriginal Art. The meeting opened a new world to the collector. Simon works with a number of well known Papunya and Kintore artists directly and invited Hinds to visit Alice Springs. For the first time Hinds was to spend time with the artists whose works he was collecting. Extensive trips with Simon and the artists to their countries became something of a passion for Hinds as he travelled the vast tracts of the western desert, experiencing at first hand the countries of, and stories behind, the paintings which later came to grace his walls.

By 2008 Hinds' indigenous collection had grown to around 800 to 1000 works and form the basis of this exhibition. The strength of Hinds' indigenous collection lies in its range and what this reveals of the depth of Aboriginal art as it has grown over the years.

As the name of this exhibition indicates, the works selected demonstrate the diverse nature of 20th century Aboriginal art through its different regions and media. Despite some uniquely different qualities, there are also many crossovers and cross fertilisations between these seemingly disparate art styles.

Susan McCulloch is co-director of McCulloch & McCulloch Australian Art Books. A leading writer on Australian art for more than thirty years for newspapers, art magazines and journals, she is also the co-author of the seminal reference book, McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art and McCulloch's Contemporary Aboriginal Art: the complete guide.

The Art of Cultural Exchange

Albert Namatjira and the Arrernte School of Watercolour

Focus works—catalogue number:

- 01. Albert Namatjira, *Untitled (Animals Running)*, c. 1936
- 03. Otto Pareroutja, *Untitled (Central Australian Landscape)*, c. 1940s
- 06. Albert Namatjira, *Spear Thrower*, c. 1938

Hermannsburg, home of the famed Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) and the school of watercolours he founded, is 130 kilometres south west of Alice Springs and was established as a mission in 1877. Encouraged by missionaries including Pastor Friedrich Albrecht, from the 1920s the mission's Arrernte residents became proficient in embroidery, lacework, carving and decorating items for sale. In 1932 Melbourne artists Rex Battarbee and John Gardner held an exhibition of their watercolour and oil landscapes, and were approached by the young Namatjira, then working as a fencer and general outdoorsman, keen to paint. Several years later, when Battarbee returned to Hermannsburg, Namatjira asked to go on a painting trip with him. The trip, as curator Alison French described in the catalogue to her 2002 seminal exhibition *Seeing the Centre*; the art of Albert Namatjira 1902–1959, proved to be important 'cultural exchanges' between the two men. Battarbee taught Namatjira the technique of watercolour and 'in return Namatjira taught Battarbee about the subjects they were to paint.' The untitled sketches *Animals Running* (cat. no.1.) and *A Successful Hunt*, (cat. no. 2)

are some of Namatjira's earliest works. Drawn c. 1936–1937 they were bought from Namatjira in Alice Springs by the pioneering air magnate Sir Reginald Ansett, from whose estate Hinds acquired them many years later.

Albert Namatjira was Australia's most famous Aboriginal artist during the early to mid 20th century. He inspired a whole school of Arrernte landscapists whose work continues today. Otto Pareroutja (1914–1973), one of three skilled painting brothers and contemporaries of Namatjira whose work, as in the untitled c. 1940s watercolour (cat. no. 3) showed a particular fluidity and expressive quality. Wenten Rubuntja (1923–2005) who learnt painting from Namatjira, became a leading cultural leader whose paintings, and life, spoke strongly of bridging the Aboriginal and Western worlds through paintings which included both those of the more realistic watercolour views for which the Hermannsburg school is best known as well as, in the Old Women's Ceremony painting (cat. no. 7) depicted, in traditional manner, the Dreaming stories of ancient myths.



01. Albert Namatjira, *Untitled (Animals Running)*, c. 1936, watercolour and pencil on paper, 29.5 x 23 cm
Courtesy The Legend Press



03. Otto Pareroutja, *Untitled (Central Australian Landscape)*, c. 1940s, watercolour on paper, 24 x 35 cm



06. Albert Namatjira, *Spear Thrower*, c. 1938, incised and painted mulga wood, 80 x 17 x 7 cm, courtesy The Legend Press



Activities

- A. Discuss the reasons why Albert Namatjira and Otto Pareroutja would have painted in a 'Western' style in the 1930/40s.
- B. Would Albert Namatjira have become popular in his early career if he had painted in a traditional Aboriginal style? Discuss further.

Art in the Land of Patterns

The Painters of Papunya and Kintore

Focus works—catalogue number:

- 12. Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, *Fire Story*, c. 1975
- 19. Nanyuma Napangati, *Women's Story*, 2006
- 22. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, *Warlugulong (Right-facing Skeletons)*, 2000

Twelve years after the death of Albert Namatjira in 1959, a new artistic era which was to resonate throughout Australian art was born at the settlement of Papunya, 250 kilometres west of Alice Springs. The intervening years had seen the establishment of an important school of design in fabric and colourful acrylics at the southern Pitjantjatjara community of Ernabella. But it was an entirely different form of art that emerged following the appointment of schoolteacher Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2003) at Papunya in February 1971. Bardon described how his teaching methods encouraged the children to paint the traditional designs based on the drawings he had seen them making on the ground.

Bardon organized examples of the designs or 'patterns' (Bardon was dubbed 'Mr. Patterns' by the children) to be printed in the school magazine. Soon, some of the senior men agreed to paint a mural. The first Honey Ant mural was painted by Kaapa Tjampitjinpa (c. 1920–1989)—a proactive painter—who had been painting before Bardon arrived at Papunya. (See cat. no. 12.) Painters of others of the first five murals, who later became foundation members of the Papunya painting school included Bill Stockman Tjapaltjarri (b.c.

1927), Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra (b.c. 1932), John Warangkula Tjupurrula (c. 1925–2001), Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi (c. 1928–1998) and Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri (c. 1926–1998) and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri (c. 1932–2002)—all of whom are represented in the Hinds collection. As Bardon was to later describe 'truly something strange and marvelous had begun'—the beginning of the Western Desert Painting movement.'

The starkly powerful *Warlugulong* (Fire Dreaming) (Right facing skeletons) (cat. no. 22) relates the story of the two brothers burnt by the fire in this important creation story and was Tjapaltjarri's last painting theme—made all the more potent by his use of striking monochrome.

One of the most notable developments during the 1990s for the Kintore/Kiwirrkura school of painting has been the rise of significance of women artists. For many years women had assisted their male relatives on paintings, yet few Papunya-based women, save for those such as Pansy and Eunice Napangardi, painted in their own right. With the passing of many of the earliest Papunya painters, and the return to their Kintore homelands women started to come to the fore. By the mid 2000s women artists



22. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, *Warlugulong (Right-facing Skeletons)*, 2000, acrylic on canvas, two panels, 122 x 61.5 cm (each panel), courtesy Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

had become the majority of artists listed on the books of Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd. The work of Pintupi artists such as Naata Nungurrayi (b.c. 1932) (cat no. 20), Nanyuma Napangarti (b.c 1938) (cat. no. 19) with their depiction of ancestral women's stories and often strong and vibrant colourations of orange, yellows, and red-pinks, broke through into new stylistic and artistic dimensions.



19. Nanyuma Napangati, *Women's Story*, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, courtesy Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd



12. Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, *Fire Story*, c. 1975, acrylic on canvas on board, 55 x 70 cm, courtesy Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

Activities

- A. From the 1990s one of the notable developments for the Kintore/Kiwinkura school was the rise in significance of women artists. Research and discuss factors that may have prevented women artists' involvement before the period, and alternatively the increasing roles of women artists?
- B. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's painting *Warlugulong* (Right-facing Skeletons), relates to the story of the two brothers burnt by fire. This important creation story was Tjapaltjarri's last painting theme. Discuss the use of a monochromatic colour scheme. Look at other Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's works and discuss differences and similarities in style and colour.

The Vibrancy of Colour

Variety Throughout the Land

Focus works—catalogue number:

- 30. Long Tom Tjapanangka, *Puli Tjuta (Many Hills)*, 2000
- 32. Artist Unknown (Utopia Batik School), *Untitled*, c. 1985
- 36. Gertie Huddlestone, *Untitled*, 1994

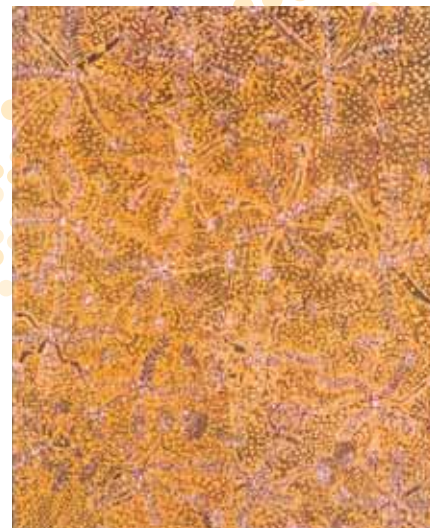
The increase in use of powerful colour has been one of the noticeable developments of Aboriginal art from the 1990s and increasing post 2000. During the 1980s, Papunya painters, who originally decided to restrict their palette to the ochre colours of yellow, black, red and white, broadened this to include other colours. However painters from this region still prefer to create their powerful imagery through use of restricted palettes. The work of Yuendumu painters, whose painting school was established some fourteen years after that of Papunya's, has always been in marked contrast to this. Painters of this important desert school such as the 1980s work by founding member Paddy Japaljarri Sims (b.c. 1917) (cat. no. 29) show the greater use of more varied colour which has been a defining characteristic of this important desert school since its establishment in the 1980s.

Related to Papunya painters, yet one who embraced the use of bold colour as in *Puli Tjuta (Many Hills)* painting (cat.no 30) was Haast's Bluff painter Long Tom Tjapanangka (c. 1929–2007). Winner of the 1998 National and Torres Straight Islander Art Award for a painting in

similar style, Tjapanangka was one of that community's founding members of its Ikuntji Art Centre in the early 1990s.

Modern day art of the eastern desert's Utopia region had started in the late 1970s with the establishment of a batik making school. More than 80 artists, the great majority of whom were women, worked with arts co-ordinators to create this extraordinary school of craft art. A fine representation of this is the subtly-shaded work of glowing colouration celebrating the bounty of bush tucker by an unidentified artist (cat. no. 32). Originally a batik maker, Ada Bird Petyarre (b.c. 1930) is only one of the artists from this region whose work such as the untitled women's story painting (cat. no. 33) later developed into painters of great note.

Despite their geographic distance and very different countries and heritage, Utopia and the southern Arnhem Land region of Ngukurr share some family links as a number of Utopia residents have moved to Ngukurr to make it their home or to live there for various periods. Ngukurr's traditional owners include the painter Gertie Huddlestone (b.c. 1924),



32. Artist Unknown (Utopia Batik School), *Untitled*, c. 1985, dyed silk over canvas, 160 x 131 cm



30. Long Tom Tjapanangka, *Puli Tjuta (Many Hills)*, 2000, acrylic on canvas, 122 x 173 cm, courtesy estate of the artist and Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

who for many years worked with her husband Willie Gudabi (1917–1996) in collaborative paintings, as well as those entirely her own such as this untitled 1994 painting (cat. no. 36). Each of the panels of this segmented work relates a different aspect of the artist's country and those who formed it.



36. Gertie Huddlestone, *Untitled*, 1994, acrylic on canvas, 63 x 58 cm, courtesy the artist

Activities

- A. The increase in use of bold colour has been one of the noticeable developments of Aboriginal art from the 1990s. During the 1980s Papunya painters decided to restrict their palette to ochre colours. The work of Yuendumu painters has been in marked contrast to this, paintings of this school show the greater use of more varied colour. Discuss the reason aboriginal artists would restrict their palette and alternatively broaden it.
- B. Discuss the reason aboriginal artists would restrict their palette and alternatively broaden it.
- C. Modern day art of the Eastern Deserts Utopia region had started in the late 1970s with the establishment of a batik making school. Research this and other craft based techniques introduced and developed in Aboriginal communities, for example pottery in the Hermannsburg community.

Ochre – An Enduring Art

Focus works–catalogue number:

- 40. Bob Burruwal and Lena Yarinkura, *Rainbow Serpent (Borlung) Swallows Rembarranga*, c. 1992
- 46. David Mowarljarli, *Wandjinas*, 1996
- 49. Lena Yarinkura, *Wurum Spirit Figure (Fish Increasing Spirit)*, 2006

Continuity and a steady evolution of styles is seen through some wonderful examples of ochres in this collection. They include those by some of the great bark artists of the 20th century such as David Malangi (1927–1999), whose work was the subject of an important touring retrospective exhibition curated by the National Gallery of Australia in 2004. One of the most important bark painters and cultural leaders of Central Arnhem Land, having painted for ceremonial purposes all his life, in the 1960s Malangi started painting art for sale. He also became famous for the appropriation of one of his works without his knowledge for use in Australia's new decimal currency (for which he later received a government apology, a fee and a medal).

Of more monumental physical scale here, however, is the 2.4 metre collaborative work (cat. no. 40) by Central Arnhem Land artists Bob Burruwal (b. 1952) and Lena Yarinkura (b. 1961) from Maningrida which relates the story of the rainbow serpent, Borlung, and its swallowing of the Rembarrnga people. Husband and wife team—Burruwal, a carver and painter and Yarinkura, a painter, carver and weaver—frequently work together collaboratively in works such as this epic bark.

Award winning artist Yarinkura has also become especially well recognized for her highly imaginative fibre sculptures such as the 2006 *Wurum Spirit Figure (Fish Increasing Spirit)* (cat. no. 49) which have taken the traditional art of weaving into new realms.

The relationship of body design and art is graphically seen in the work of leading Tiwi artist Jean Baptiste Apuatimi (b. 1940) (cat. no. 48), while Kimberley artists Lily Karedada's (b. 1937) striking figure of the life and rain-bringing Wandjina figure (cat. no. 45) as with the similar group of figures in those by fellow artist David Mowarljarli (1928–1997) (cat. no. 46) are derived from those made on cave walls throughout the coastal Kimberley regions for hundreds of years.

46. David Mowarljarli, *Wandjinas*, 1996, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 180 cm, courtesy estate of the artist



49. Lena Yarinkura, *Wurum Spirit Figure (Fish Increasing Spirit)*, 2006, ochres and mixed media, 68 x 63 x 30 cm, courtesy Maningrida Arts & Culture

Activities

- A. The 'Wandjina' is a significant part of aboriginal culture. Research the Wandjina and describe its story.
- B. Review traditional Japanese woodblock prints — discuss similarities and differences between them and traditional ochre paintings.
- C. Some aboriginal communities have restricted depicting their peoples 'stories' in paintings for the outside market. Discuss why this would be the case. Take the discussion further by researching why some communities restricted extending traditional techniques? While other communities and individuals explored painting with bolder colour and new techniques.



40. Bob Burruwal and Lena Yarinkura, *Rainbow Serpent (Borlung) Swallows Rembarranga*, c. 1992, ochre on stringbark, 239 x 88 cm, courtesy Maningrida Arts & Culture

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Notes:

Alison French, *Seeing the Centre: the art of Albert Namatjira 1902–1959*, Araluen Arts Centre and National Gallery of Australia, 2002. p.9.

Geoffrey and James Bardon, *'The Men and the Walls', in A Place made after the Story*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2004. p. 17.