



NYINUNGA: WINTER IN THE SPINIFEX

Spinifex Arts Project

13TH SEPTEMBER – 4TH OCTOBER



8 Hele



8 Hele Gallery
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8-hele.com

8 Hele Gallery respectfully acknowledges the Arrernte as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are situated. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Spinifex Arts Project



8 Hele Gallery

NYINNGA: WINTER IN THE SPINIFEX

*Nyinnga: Winter in the Spinifex
presents a survey of work produced by
artists of the Spinifex Arts Project.*

This year brought a severe summer to the Great Victoria Desert—48 degrees in the shade, air conditioners failing, and battery systems overheating. But the Spinifex Arts Project toiled on. Born in the bush, this art movement has never relied on such luxuries. Roll out the canvas and keep on trucking, the artists insisted.

Although spirits remained high throughout the gruelling summer, the cool edge of May and June was welcomed. Nyinnga is the Pitjantjatjara word used for this season as the desert colours shift and the cold fog of winter rolls in. The fireplace becomes the hub of the Art Centre, with artists edging their canvases as close to the hearth as geometry allows. The days become shorter and the light softens, the studio a hum of activity.

Nyinnga informs both bounty and bust in the desert. It also informs the very sites that are depicted in these paintings, whether it's Ned Grant's Papatatjara, Lennard Walker's powerful Kulyuru or Timo Hogan's Lake Baker, nyinnga brings forth different colour and composition in the landscape that emerge through each painting. Nyinnga invites the viewer to see Tjukurpa as both ancient and contemporary as it shifts throughout the seasons.





LENNARD WALKER

Lennard was born at Tjukaltjara on the central northern border of Spinifex circa 1946.

Tjukaltjara is an extension of a massive Seven Sisters site centred at Kuru Ala (eyes open) which could describe the state of alertness required by the sisters being relentlessly stalked across great tracts of central Australia by the obsessively amorous Nyiiru. Lennard's country lies at the crossover of the endless dunes of Spinifex and the ironstone ranges to the north punctuated by a series of spectacular breakaways and mesas. Women from the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Spinifex Lands regularly convene together at Kuru Ala to practice Women's ceremonies. In keeping with strict protocol the women first must ask Mr. Walker for permission to enter his country. Diplomatically, Mr. Walker never refuses.

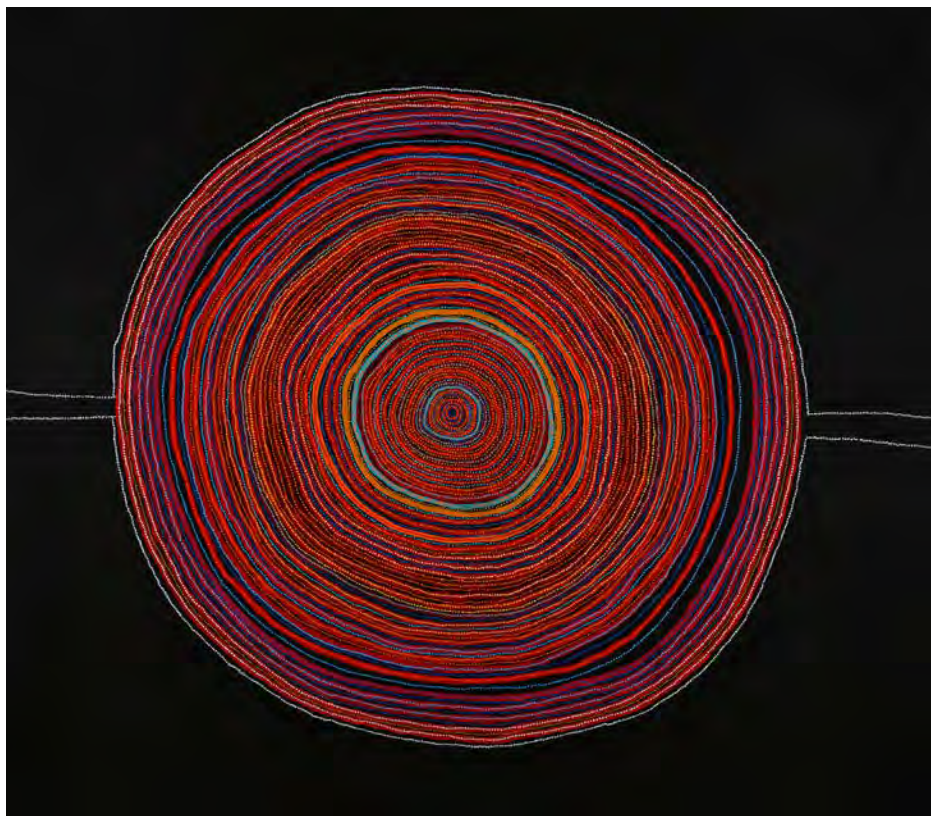
Unlike most born in country artists Lennard moved out of Spinifex with his extended family to the Warburton Mission, established in 1934. Lennard spent time at the Mission school and picked up a good deal of conversational English. This was to serve him well later during the new political era that ensued after the transfer from mission authority to Aboriginal "self-management". Lennard's family were comparative strangers in Warburton and took the first opportunity to move to Cundeelee Mission to join the other Spinifex families there.

In the early years of Tjuntjuntjara Lennard married a Warburton woman, Ngalkpinkga Simms, who settled in Tjuntjuntjara with Lennard. Lennard painted on the inaugural men's native title painting, most other

men's collaboratives, joint works with other male painters and wife, Ngalkpinkga. In style and form Lennard continues from where he began, a ruggedly strong and resolute painter - the image of his country.

In 2008 Lennard was a finalist in the W.A. Indigenous Art Awards, Perth W.A.





LENNARD WALKER

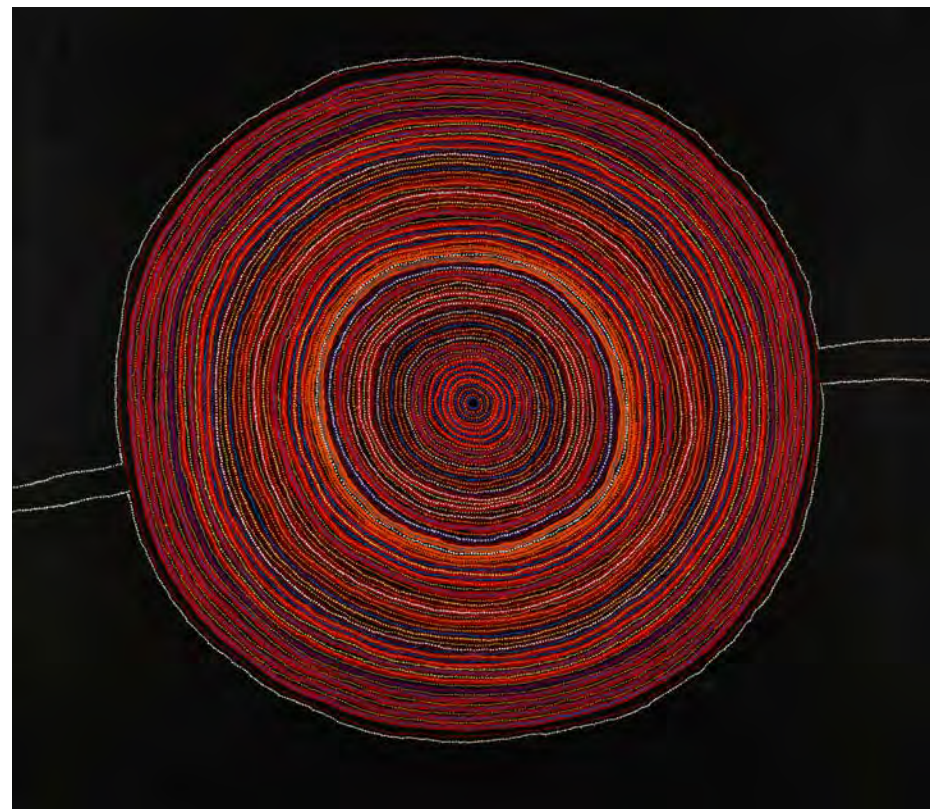
Piriylili, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-256

230 x 200cm

\$ 18,000



LENNARD WALKER

Kulyuru, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-163

230 x 200cm

\$ 18,000



LENNARD WALKER

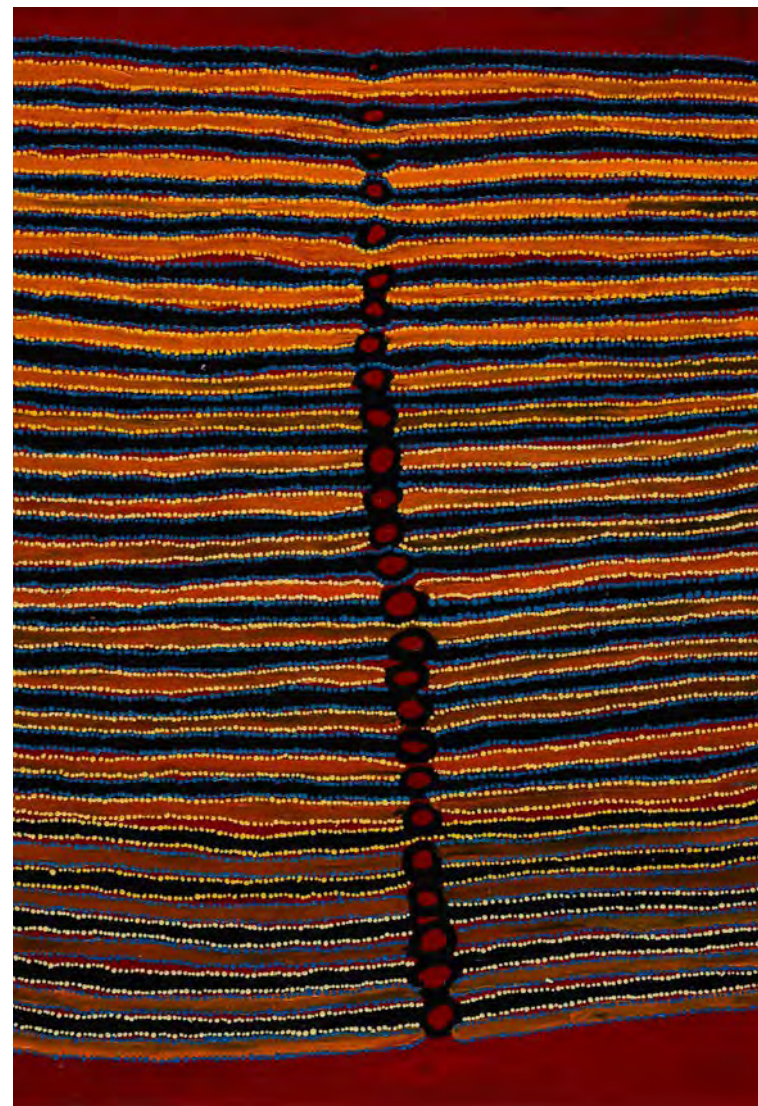
Tali Tjuta, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-73

200 x 137cm

\$ 9,000



LENNARD WALKER

Tali Tjuta, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-27

110 x 85cm

\$ 3,000



TIMO HOGAN

Timo grew up with stories of life in the Spinifex Lands. His mother and family dug themselves into the sand dunes to try to avoid the smoke from the Maralinga atomic bomb.

Before he was born she walked to a location close to Tjuntjuntjara and found a pile of tin meat left by the patrol officer. A white man came and picked all the people up in an old Landrover and drove them into Cundeelee Mission. Later his mother was driven from Cundeelee to the old hospital in Kalgoorlie for Timo's birth in 1973.

After his birth his mother succumbed to the lure of alcohol in Kalgoorlie and struggled to look after a new baby properly. Timo's father came and took him to Mt Margaret. He spent his formative years here with his father, Neville McCarthur and his stepmother Alkawari. They lived at Mt Margaret until the family moved to Warburton, closer to his father's traditional lands. Alkawari did not speak Pitjantjatjara or Ngaanyatjarra as she was from a different Aboriginal tribe, but spoke in English to Timo and he is now fluent in all three languages.

Once back in country Timo's father took him to all the culturally significant places. He wanted to introduce him to the country, to the spirit caretakers and teach him the law. "My father took me to Lake Baker, all around, rockhole and all. I know all these places but I can't show them. Millmillpa (dangerously sacred). I'm taking over this country now, as my father is getting old. I'm the only son and people say we are like twins, my father and me. We look the same. I know how to use spears – he taught me everything."

Timo went through Men's Business initiation at Warburton. The group travelled down to Tjuntjuntjara on the business run. "My father's really a Spinifex Man. His brothers are Hogan and Jamieson". After going through business Timo settled in Tjuntjuntjara and lived with his mother. His father visited regularly before he got too old to make the long journey.

For a brief period in the 2000's Timo lived at Kalka as his mother married a man from there. He did his first canvas, a painting of the Lake Baker with Ninuku Artists in 2004. After a long break of nearly 10 years he has started painting again. Painting his country, the vast salt lake, the place he now has cultural obligations to look after. A place of power and danger. "I've rediscovered my love for painting. I do painting all the time now. I'm painting my country Lake Baker"

In 2021 Timo's work 'Lake Baker' was the overall winner in prestigious Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Art Awards. His works are highly sought after and hang in major public institutions and art museums as well as substantial private collections.



Michael & Timo
Photo by: Phillip Gostelow



TIMO HOGAN
Lake Baker, 2025
 Acrylic on linen
 25-164
 230 x 200cm
 \$ 23,500



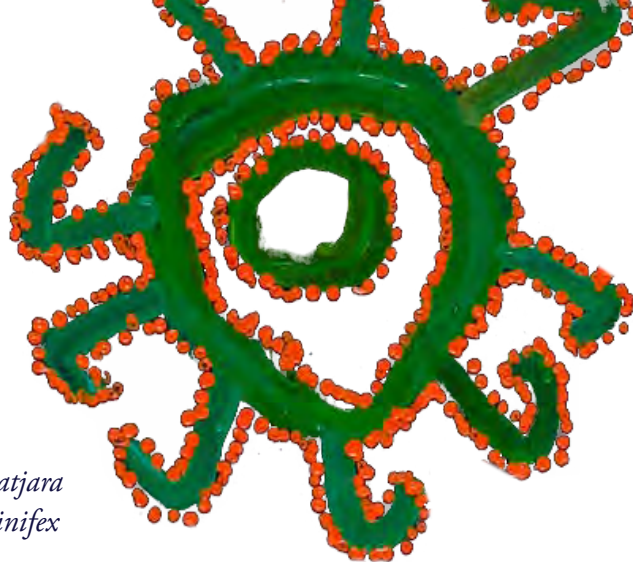
TIMO HOGAN
Lake Baker, 2025
 Acrylic and sand on linen
 25-147
 290 x 200cm
 \$ 32,000

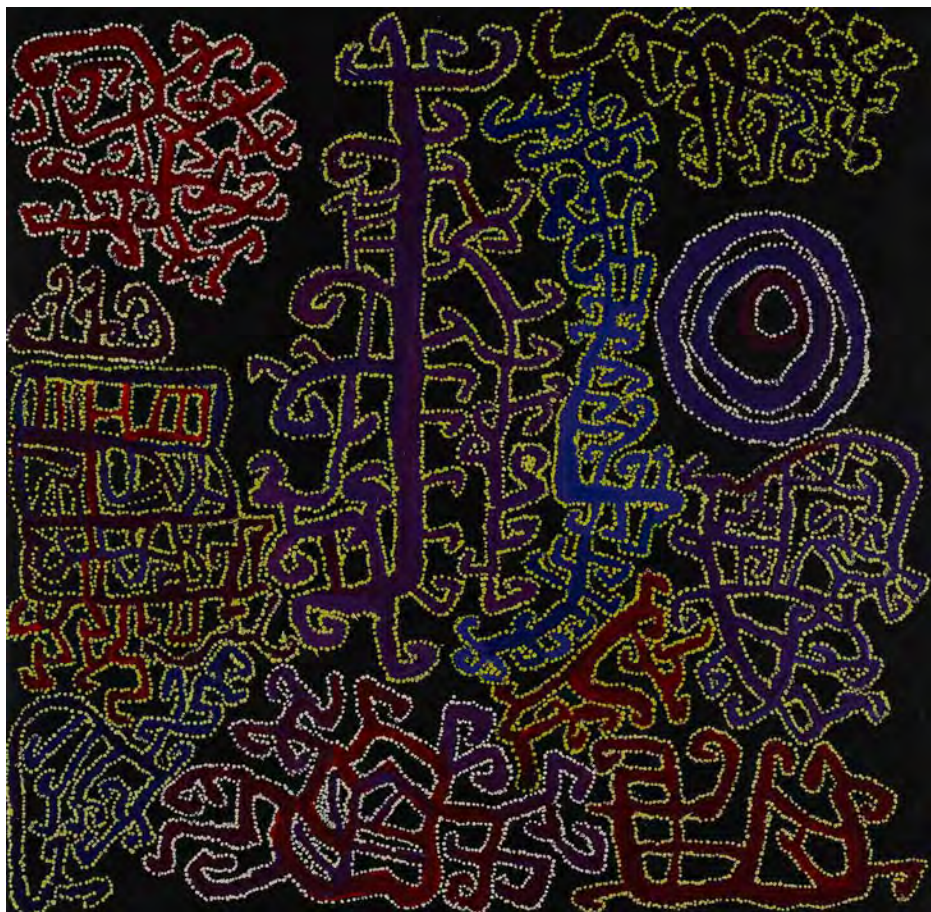
NED GRANT

Ned Grant was born near Papatatjara in the north-east quadrant of Spinifex Country in the Great Victoria Desert, WA.

During the Aboriginal Evangelical Mission (AEM) sweep through Spinifex in the late 1950's Ned was taken into Cundeelee Mission with older brother, Ted (dec) and younger brother Fred (dec). Ned was a nyiingka (segregated bush boy) when he came in and was inducted into Men's Law in the ranges country north-west of Laverton.

Ned, a senior man by the early 1980's, helped drive the return to Spinifex country. Today Ned is the main ceremonial leader of the Tjintu (sun side) of Spinifex society. Ned has been painting with the Spinifex Art Project since its beginning in 1997. His works have been included in major exhibitions nationally and internationally. Ned was one of 17 men who collaboratively painted their particular estates, which merged together, formed the Men's Native Title painting. Ned continues to paint his "run" - the area around where he was born and subsequently lost his umbilical cord.





NED GRANT

Wakura, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-254

137 x 140cm

\$ 9,000



NED GRANT

Tjantuwa, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-158

137 x 140cm

\$ 9,000



NED GRANT

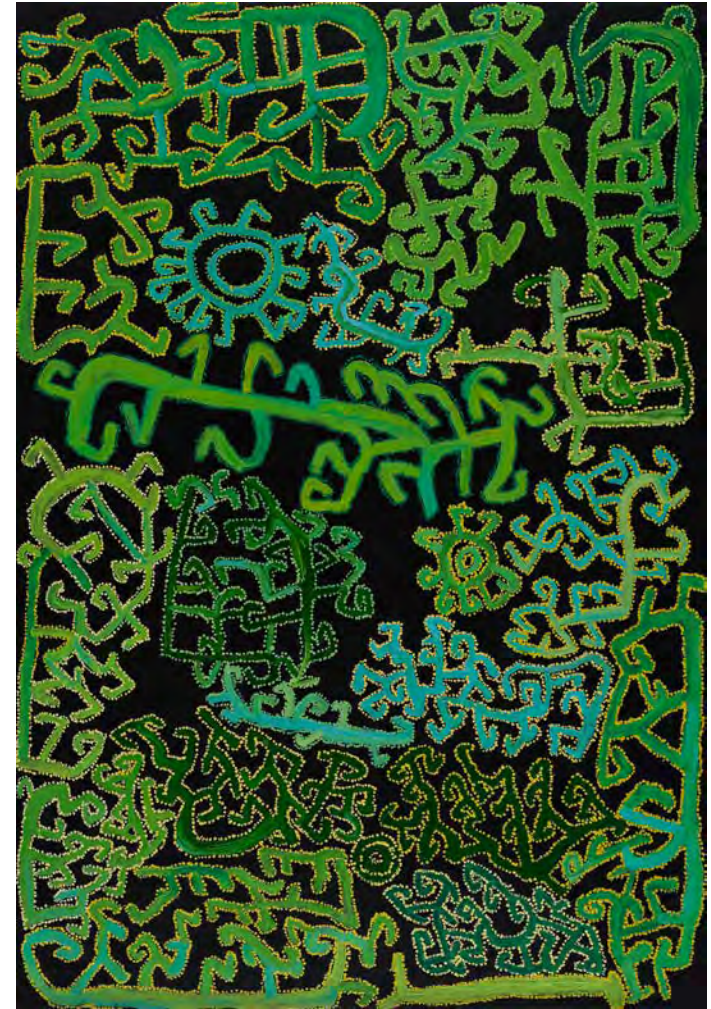
Mulpula, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-154

137 x 90cm

\$ 6,000



NED GRANT

Tjuntalatjara munu Yuwar, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-115

200 x 137 cm

\$ 14,000



NED GRANT

Yuwar, 2024

Acrylic on linen

24-460

137 x 90cm

\$ 6,000



SIMON HOGAN

Simon Hogan was born circa 1930 in mid-western Spinifex between Paltju and Lingka.

Simon's exact age is unknown as dates of birth were estimated by the A.E.M. missionaries when the Spinifex people, on arrival at Cundeelee, were "sorted" into family groups, given English names and approximate dates of birth. During childhood two fathers, one born at Warakunu and the other at Munki raised Simon. Simon's mother's country is around Tjulya. The Spinifex people were a relatively discreet southern Pitjantjatjara tribal group with ties to the north and east that lived a fully traditional hunter-gatherer life until the late 1950's to early 1960s when most people either walked into Ooldea and Cundeelee or were taken by AEM missionaries to Cundeelee Mission. As a late teenager or nyiingka living in seclusion from Aboriginal society prior to initiation into manhood, Simon and an older brother made an epic journey from the Spinifex lands to a Christian Mission at Mt. Margaret. He travelled there via the frontier mining towns of Laverton and Leonora. The older brother chose to stay at Mt. Margaret and Simon returned to the Great Victoria Desert and initiate into manhood. Sometime after initiation Simon travelled across the Serpentine Lakes into South Australia to find a wife. He married Inyika and they had two of their seven children in country before going to Cundeelee Mission around 1960. A second wife, Ngantiri, also traveled in with Simon's family group. From 1995 Simon Hogan was a prominent member of a group of senior traditional owners from Spinifex country who lobbied the WA State Government for Native Title. Although Simon spoke no English he was a confident, initiated Pitjantjatjara man who spoke to senior government

officials regarding ownership of country and culture. Exclusive Native Title rights were granted to Simon Hogan and the Spinifex people in 2000 of over 55 000 sq kms of the Great Victoria Desert in WA. In 1997 the Spinifex people began painting with acrylic paints on canvas, painting traditional stories using this contemporary medium. Simon again took a leading working with intense concentration and focus to translate Tjukurpa (stories or mythologies) into public artworks. The Spinifex people also produced collaborative works two of which, men's' and women's', were used in the preamble to the successful Spinifex Native Title claim. Simon is an effusive individual who introduces himself as "Mr. Hogan" and will happily recount his many exhibition travels throughout Australia and the world. For over a decade he carried a photo of himself and Gough Whitlam in his wallet until the photo eventually disintegrated. The photo was taken during the 1998 Pila Nguru Native Title touring exhibition. The Whitlams were invited to open the exhibition in Canberra. In 2009 Simon travelled to Linz, Austria to be an Artist in Residence during the 2009, Linz Cultural Capital of Europe Exposition. He is a tireless ambassador for Spinifex custom and culture. In 2015 well into his 80's he travelled to London representing the Spinifex people at an exhibition at the British Museum, where he met with HRH Prince Charles. Over the years Simon Hogan's enthusiasm and focus for painting on linen has not diminished. His status as a painter in his own community and on a national and international level has steadily increased over these years making him one of the most sought-after Spinifex artists. His works feature in many public and private collections.

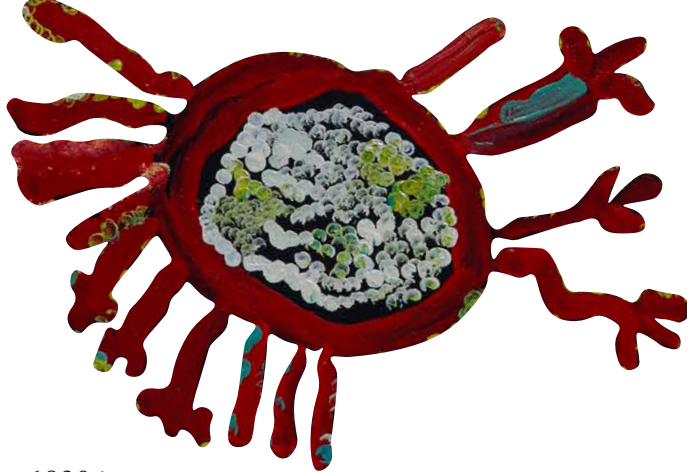


Photo by: Spinifex Art Project 2015



SIMON HOGAN

Lingka, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-112

137 x 90cm

\$ 8,000



SIMON HOGAN

Lingka, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-64

230 x 200cm

\$ 26,500



SIMON HOGAN

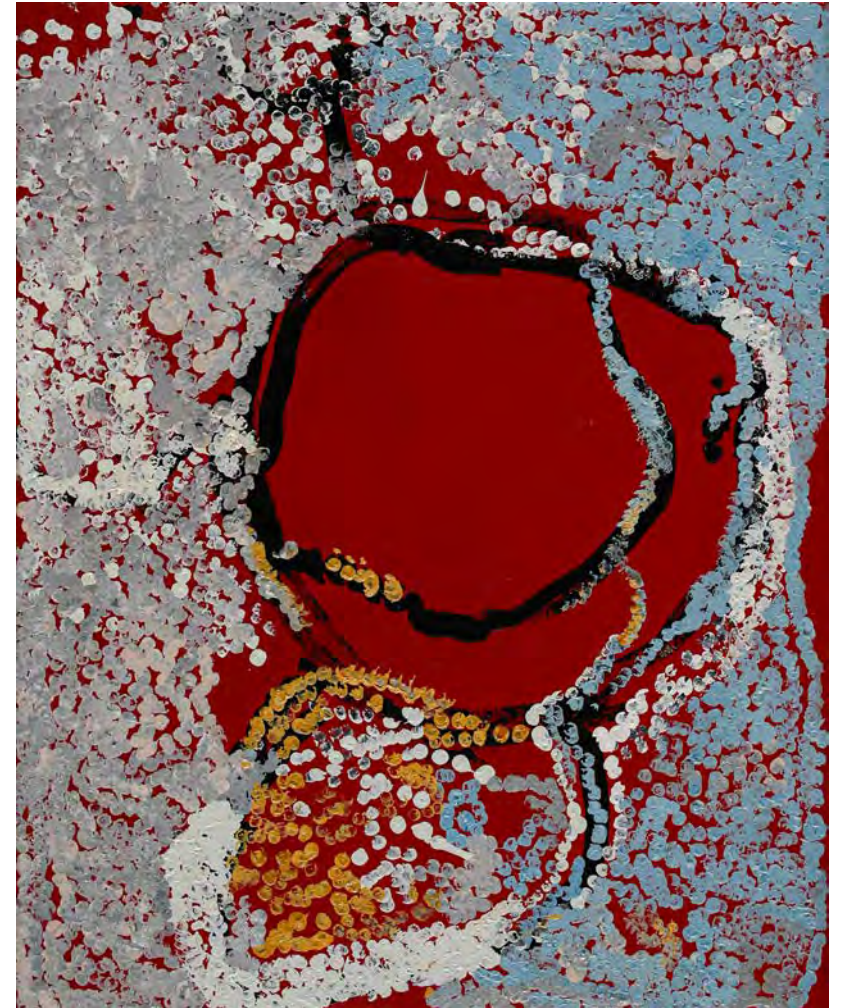
Lingka, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-54

137 x 90cm

\$ 8,000



SIMON HOGAN

Lingka, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-52

60 x 75cm

\$ 2,500

PATJU PRESLEY

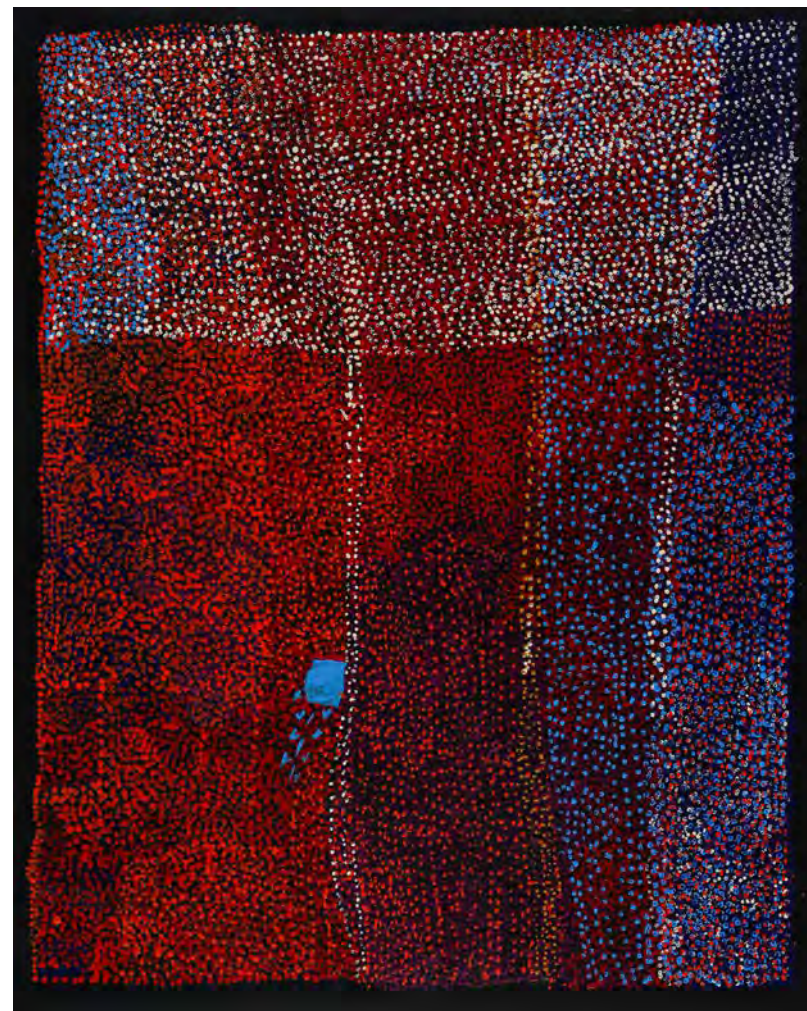
Patju Presley was born in the 1940s at Itaratjara, an important site between the community settlement of Watarru and Kalayapiti in the Great Victoria Desert.

He is a senior Pitjantjatjara Law man with great knowledge of the geography of the Western Desert and the associated Tjukurpa. His intimate knowledge of the country is directly related to survival in this beautiful but sometimes harsh environment learned from the generations of his ancestors.

Connections between the Land, the provider of food, water and shelter and the Tjukurpa a spiritual understanding of the world are finely interwoven in his paintings, creating works of an elegant abstraction. Each work is related to a specific site and ancestral beings and is strongly based on his experience and perception of the Law and the Land. When he was a young child he lived a traditional lifestyle walking along Tjukurpa tracks that linked sacred sites and water sources. From the tjilpis (old men) he learnt the ways of life in the desert and Anangu social order, law, culture, Tjukurpa and ceremony. Patju first learnt about Christianity from Mr Wade, the missionary who came to the desert on camel preaching the Bible and giving out tea and damper. When the mission was established Patju spent some time there learning English to read and write hymns and Bible stories. Patju trained to be a preacher at the mission at Ernabella. He is also a strong cultural man who practices traditional cultural business and inma (ceremonial singing and dancing), carves punu (ceremonial and utilitarian objects) and hunts malu (kangaroo), kalaya (emu), kipara (bush turkey) and rabbit.



In his paintings Patju refers to many of the Tjukurpa of the country of the Great Victoria Desert including the Wati Kipara (Bush Turkey), Wati Kutjara (Two Water-Snake Men), Kalaya (Emu), Wati Pira (Moon Man) and Minyma Kutjara (Two Sisters). His images are visual representations of the epic journeys and creation stories of the country. References to important landforms, rockholes and Tjukurpa tracks implicitly evoke the tjukuritja beings (of the dreaming), their interactions and activities. References to features in the country by desert artists are heavily loaded with complex symbolic meanings and interconnected layers of cultural references.



PATJU PRESLEY

Tjungan, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-148

137 x 110cm

\$ 11,000

NGALPINGKA SIMMS

Ngalpingka Simms was born at a place in Western Australia known to Anangu (Aboriginal people) as Wayiyul. Wayiyul is a Seven Sister's site, situated to the north of Warburton Community, and is therefore a sacred site.

Ngalpingka spent her early days living a traditional lifestyle with her small family group and later moved into Warburton Mission where many Ngaanyatjarra people settled. She spent many years at Warburton living a semi nomadic lifestyle and participating in traditional ceremony. Now living at Tjuntjuntjara and married to Spinifex elder Lennard Walker Ngalpingka paints with the Spinifex Arts Project. She has participated with the Spinifex Artists since 1998 and is a valuable and knowledgeable member of the group who paints her homeland area associated with the Minyma Tjuta (Seven Sisters) as well as collaborative paintings.





NGALPINGKA SIMMS

Wayiyul, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-43

110 x 85cm

\$3,000



NGALPINGKA SIMMS

Wayiyul, 2025

Acrylic on linen

25-17

200 x 137cm

\$8,500



NGALPINGKA SIMMS

Wayiyul, 2023

Acrylic on linen

23-135

230 x 200cm

\$16,000



Photo by: Spinifex Art Project 37

MICHAEL HOGAN

Michael was born at Cundeelee Mission in the late sixties to Simon and Estelle Hogan.

He went to the Mission primary school and high school at Coonana after Cundeelee closed. He attended Wongatha Caps, a Christian Collage in Esperance and also did some schooling in Perth. Michael married a woman from Yalata and he has several children and grandchildren. He has watched from afar his parents hugely successful painting careers and in early 2023 decided he was ready and comfortable to depict his story on canvas. Michael paints Upupily Upupilya, a very important Tjukurpa from Cundeelee.



MICHAEL HOGAN

Upupily-upupilya, 2025

Acrylic on canvas

25-85

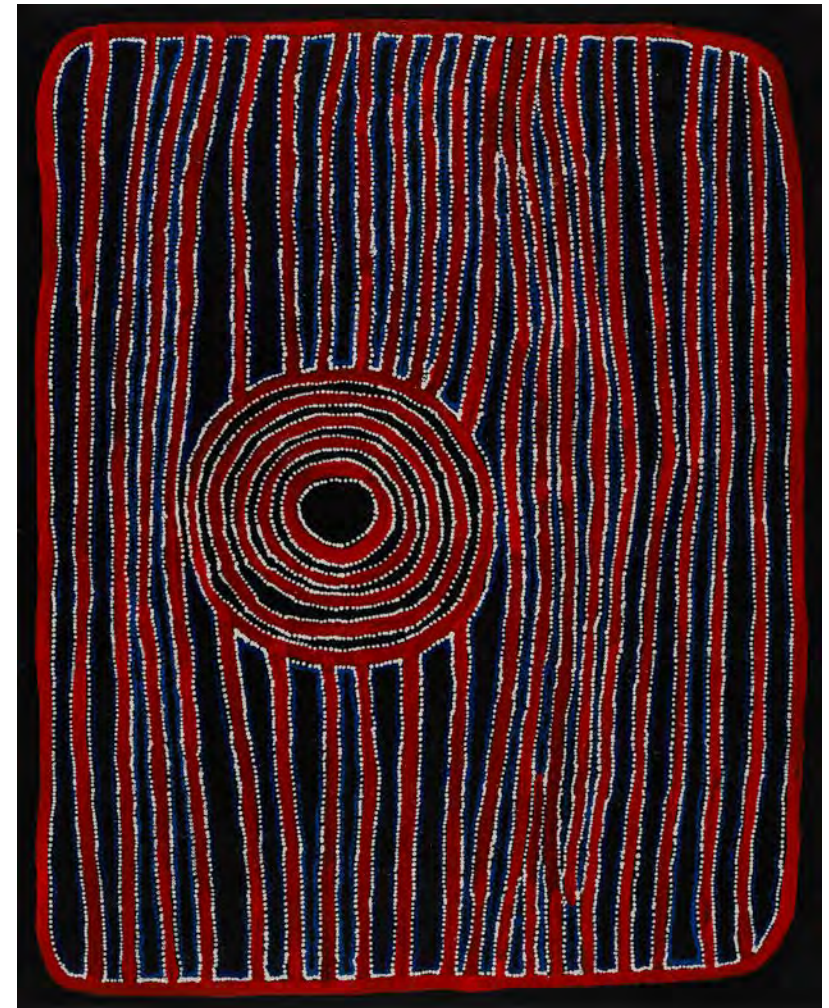
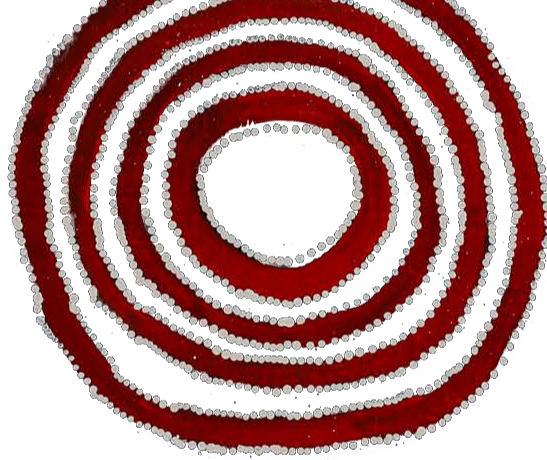
200 x 137cm

\$6,500

IAN RICTOR

*Ian Rictor was born at Artulin /
Tuwan c1955 and is a custodian
and traditional owner of Tuwan a
significant site in the heart of
Spinifex Country.*

Ian paints with a quiet reverence for the country that he depicts, from his relatively recent nomadic movements over the endless interior that makes up Spinifex Lands. Ian walked from water source to food source and beyond. This was a cultural and family existence for survival in an arid land before his family were located and 'brought in' by relatives in 1986, and they are the last of the known Aboriginal people to have remained living traditionally in the Great Victoria Desert. Ian's compositions center on the life affirming sites he depicts and each are multi layered with meaning. Many are surrounded with secrecy and only surface details can be recorded. His site of Tuwan is where the Tjulpu Tjuta Tjukurpa (Many Birds Creation Line) manifests. This is an epic Mens' Creation narrative that follows the journey south of the Wati Nyii Nyii (Zebra Finch Men) where they place their many spears to save the world from being inundated with floodwaters. In 1997 when the Spinifex Arts Project first began Ian was keen to join the group of painters. He took to the medium of paint on canvas with fluency and has been painting his birthplace and surrounding country since then and has exhibited and been collected in both Australia and overseas. Ian is an impressive and skilled hunter, bush mechanic and craftsman who lives in Tjuntjuntjara Community with his extended family.



IAN RICTOR

Tuwan, 2024

Acrylic on linen

24-155

137 x 110cm

\$4,500

ILA NGURU

Everything that happens on Spinifex country is intense. The power and the passion. How creation stories underpin the way that people live.

How an ancient and moral universe might be contained and continued with a robust energy. Because everything is related in this living landscape. The ground, the flora, the fauna, the sharp and the soft in the palette as you walk or drive through these lands. Deeply ingrained knowledge layered on the vast terrain. Generational. Walking paths taken over and again in the lifetimes of community members and many of them epic journeys up and down and across, from rockhole to rockhole for hundreds of kilometres. The adjective significant can exaggerate the message, but there is no escaping its precision when applied to the Spinifex Arts Project studio at Tjuntjuntjara, nestled within a community with a distinct advantage: of contained size and intertwined family grouping and a dramatic range of moments of adversity. The old people were born in this Country and painting helped get this Country back.

I had a clear inkling of all these matters having fallen in love with the artists through their works on gallery walls and in books and catalogues, and meeting some of them during their visits to cities. But this, I realised, was a minor preparation once I arrived at the Arts Centre. I made the journey to the Great Victoria Desert and Tjuntjuntjara with a friend who is as ardent an appreciator as me. We travelled to pay homage to the Anangu artists in their community and spent time meeting and observing these artists in their expansive and beautiful studio. This gave us precious insights into what enables artistic expression and what is contained and possible in small remote and largely inaccessible communities. When you belong somewhere as incontrovertibly as they do, take custodianship seriously, and share knowledge generously. What is contained in a life: the materials passed down and the lived experiences both quotidian

and exceptional. Vast distances are suddenly re-scaled when this country, so redolent with Tjukurpa, the sacred dreaming lines of knowledge, is rendered on a canvas. When that beauty of composition—the colours and shapes and contrasts—is animated by the artist with words explaining its symbolic meaning and deep knowledge, it is akin to an epiphany for the city-born visitors. Not that the words need to be spoken. These are moral narratives depth-located between earth and sky. The artists involved in this exhibition at 8 Hele Gallery were born between the 1930s and the 1970s. As they say themselves, they are painting for Country. Catching, capturing the light and shade of their Country and the big narratives of their tradition and history. A matter of survival, literally. The phenomenal feat of walking this Country across the vast distances, approaching all of it with great respect as well as a reverence for those young people who follow them. Imagine being able to record all of this. Knowledge of the sun and the shadow. The Tjukurpa that animates a living landscape. This is where the moral is situated in my words here: the entire catalogue of cautionary tales that human societies collect to keep them from harm, with the addition of the external and monumental horrors of the twentieth century—the upheavals and displacement from tradition and, ultimately, the return to Country through legal channels. The aspects of the world and its people are captured here, with beauty, in these artworks looking back at you in this gallery.

Tuwan. Itaratjara. Papatatjara. Mulpua. Tjintin Tjintirpa. Yuwa. Lingka. Wayiyul. Paltju. Kamina. Tjungan.

Just some of these places...

TERRI-ANN WHITE, 2025



