



Pansy Napangati

born c. 1948

Community:

Papunya, Northern Territory

Language: Luritja-Warlpiri

In contrast to many other Aboriginal women artists, Pansy Napangati began painting on her own in the early 1970s rather than assisting male relatives. She was born in Haasts Bluff but has lived in Papunya since 1960.



Copyright of Japingka
Gallery

Linda Syddick (Tjungkaya Napaltjarri)

born 1941

Community:

Papunya, Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi-Luritja

Although deeply rooted in ancient tradition, Australian Aboriginal art is very open to new cultural influences, which is particularly apparent in the work of Linda Syddick (Tjungkaya Napaltjarri). In her very personal and contemporary works, Dreamings are understood as an ongoing process of revelation of new experiences of all types.



Dorothy Napangardi Robinson

born c. 1956

Community:

Yuendumu, Northern Territory

Residence: Alice Springs,

Northern Territory

Language: Warlpiri

While the artist's early work reflects the typical style of art from Yuendumu, since 1998 Napangardi has developed a range of individualistic marks that she applies in very intricate patterns using subtle variations of black, white, and earth colors. The resulting canvases shimmer with the illusion of movement. Although Napangardi maps the paths of her ancestors with the same aerial view employed by other Aboriginal artists, her style of representation is very experimental in its sweeping and delicate patterning.



Bessie Nakamarra Sims

born c. 1932

Community:

Yuendumu, Northern Territory

Language: Warlpiri

Bessie Nakamarra Sims is a senior painter whose work is fairly typical of Yuendumu in its style and iconography. She led a long, traditional life in the bush before coming into contact with white people. Sims has been painting since the mid-1980s and is also active in her community's efforts to control alcohol and drug abuse.



Alice Nampitjinpa

born c. 1943

Community:

Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

Alice Nampitjinpa's early paintings resemble those from Papunya; however, she soon developed her own style of bold, simplified abstractions. Nampitjinpa represents the sand hills around her birthplace, Talaalpi, a swamp west of Ikuntji. Shades of red and yellow represent the natural ochres used in body painting.



Mitjili Napurrula

born c. 1945

Community:

Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

Coming from a family of well-respected artists, including her brother Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula (c. 1942–2001), Mitjili Napurrula is one of the most innovative desert painters. She confidently uses vivid colors in stark contrast to represent her father's land as well as his Dreaming, Ualki (also spelled Uwalki).



Gabriella Possum Nungurrayi

born 1967

Community:

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Language: Anmatyerre

I was born in 1967 in Alice Springs and attended the Aboriginal Schools there where I studied traditional Aboriginal culture, Art and the basic requirements. I have painted Aboriginal paintings with my father, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, since I was fourteen years old. I sold paintings in Alice Springs for many years and I have now relocated to Warrandyte, Victoria, with my husband and two small children.

-Gabriella Possum Nungurrayi



Lorna Napurrula Fencer

born c. 1925

Community:

Lajamanu, Northern Territory

Language: Warlpiri

Lorna Napurrula Fencer spent many years painting ceremonial body designs and did not begin to produce works on canvas until she was in her sixties.



Photo by Tara Ebes

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

1916–1996

Community:

Utopia, Northern Territory

Language: Anmatyerre

Whole lot, that's whole lot.... That's what I paint, whole lot.

–Emily Kame Kngwarreye

A senior member of the Anmatyerre language group, Kngwarreye began to paint on canvas in her late seventies, after decades of ritual artistic activity. Her work received immediate attention from critics, collectors, and fellow artists alike and she was represented posthumously in the 1997 Venice Biennale. Unlike most desert painters at the time, she did not use stylized representations of animal tracks or concentric circles in her designs, but employed richly layered brushstrokes or dabs throughout her abstract compositions. Her free handling of paint using various implements, a keen sense of color, and dynamic compositions earned her international fame. Kngwarreye was prodigiously creative, and it is estimated that she executed around three thousand works in an eight-year period.



Gloria Tamerre Petyarre

born c. 1948

Community:

Utopia, Northern Territory

Language: Anmatyerre

I paint *awelye* [women's designs and ceremonies]... People
have to use their imagination. -Gloria Tamerre Petyarre

Among Emily Kame Kngwarreye's nieces are seven skin group sisters, women who may or may not be genetically related but are designated as sisters in a complex kinship system, all of whom are artists. Two of them, Gloria and Kathleen Petyarre, use a multitude of dots to create a sense of movement in their paintings. Gloria Tamerre Petyarre's country, Anungara, serves as her inspiration as she turns traditional motifs, such as leaves, into abstract patterns.



Kathleen Petyarre

born c. 1930

Community:

Utopia, Northern Territory

Language: Eastern Anmatyerre

Kathleen Petyarre evokes the subtlety and drama of the desert with all-over patterns of intricate marks that relate to her Dreamings and the land. Her paintings have been described as “magisterial works that can be likened to symphonic compositions.” In a display of technical brilliance and painstaking execution, Petyarre applies many layers of paint, which combine to subtly suggest depth.



Abie Loy Kemarre

born 1972

Community:

Utopia, Northern Territory

Language: Eastern Anmatyerre

Abie Loy Kemarre, granddaughter of Kathleen Petyarre, belongs to a younger generation of Utopia artists. Loy has already demonstrated a sure command of her gestural vocabulary and an eagerness to experiment with form and color.



Ningura Napurrula

born c. 1938

Community:

Walungurru (Kintore),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

Using line as her predominant compositional device, Ningura Napurrula layers paint heavily on her canvases. The stark black-and-white palette the artist sometimes employs is more commonly associated with men's painting; however, Napurrula depicts the travels of her female ancestors and the mythological significance of the food they collected.



Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

c. 1935–1999

Community:

Walungurru (Kintore),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

Inyuwa Nampitjinpa greatly abstracts and simplifies the basic symbolic elements of desert painting. In her loose and energetic compositions, circles, lines, and the typical U shapes become apparent only upon close scrutiny.



Tatali Nangala

c. 1925–2000

Community:

Walungurru (Kintore),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

In the 1960s Tatali Nangala moved from the area around Kintore to Papunya, returning a few years later. She participated in a large women's painting project in the early 1990s and became a full-time artist the last five years of her life.



Makinti Napanangka

born 1930

Community:

Walungurru (Kintore),
Northern Territory

Language: Pintupi

Makinti Napanangka is a cousin of Tatali Nangala. Her work may appear as abstract interplays of yellow, orange, and white circles and lines; however, Napanangka's paintings are still based on the *Kungka Kutjarra* (Two Women) Dreaming. The wandering lines in Napanangka's compositions relate to the hairstring skirts that women wear during Pintupi ceremonies; the songs and dances performed at these rites are suggested in the repetitive clusters of lines. In typical Walungurru style, the paintings are freely executed and are often enlivened by a stray line or a patch of a different color.



Lucy Yukenbarri Napanangka

1934–2003

Community:
Balgo Hills (Wirrimanu),
Western Australia
Language: Kukatja

Lucy Yukenbarri Napanangka used bold hues and heavily applied paint in simple compositions that represent topographical elements, including sand dunes and water holes. The work's dense pigmentation is created by the convergence of individual dots of paint. This technique, of Napanangka's own invention, is now known as *kinti-kinti* (close-close). Napanangka was an important member of her community, for she held the rights to several Dreamings associated with local sources of food and water.



Eubena Nampitjin

born c. 1925

Community:

Balgo Hills (Wirrimanu),
Western Australia

Language: Kukatja

Currently the best-known artist of Balgo Hills is Eubena Nampitjin, who paints the land of her birth, far to the south of the community. Nampitjin is an esteemed law woman and was taught traditional healing skills by her mother. She was raised in the lifestyle of a nomadic hunter, and she still spends large amounts of time in the bush. Her opulent paintings display intense hues of red, orange, or pink—a signature style she arrived at in 1989.



Copyright of Japingka Gallery

Queenie McKenzie

c. 1930–1998

Community:

Warmun (Turkey Creek),
Western Australia

Language: Gija

I like a do country. What you know country. And where you go to Sunday road, somewhere walkabout, you look hill like that. You take notice. 'Ah! I can draw this,' you say. You go back la camp. You camp might be that day. That morning you get up, just get your paint and run that hill where he sit down. I got to run 'em that Bow River hill yet. I'm going for that I tell you. -Queenie McKenzie

Queenie McKenzie was the first well-known woman painter of east Kimberley. Her subjects range from important geographical sites and Christian themes to witnessed or historical events. In typical Warmun style, her subjects are presented against a background of geographical features that are arranged in rows or multiples. Because she had a white father, McKenzie narrowly escaped being taken away from her mother by force. She worked on the old and new stations of Texas Downs as a cook for nearly forty years until she moved to the Warmun community in the mid-1970s. Once there, her friend Rover Thomas (c. 1926–1998), one of the best-known Australian Aboriginal artists, encouraged her to take up art. Eventually McKenzie herself became an inspiration to younger artists.



Lena Nyadbi

born c. 1937

Community:

Warmun (Turkey Creek),
Western Australia

Language: Gija

While Lena Nyadbi employs some elements typical of Warmun style, the subtle shifts of color and form and the repetition of abstract linear elements are unique. Nyadbi did not start painting until 1998, at age sixty-one.



Lily Karedada

born c. 1935

Community:

Kalumburu, Western Australia

Language: Tjarintjin-Wunumbal

Part of a large family of artists, Lily Karedada depicts Wandjina on canvas as well as on bark and in prints. The Wandjina, powerful ancestors of the Woonambal tribe, are spirits of the sky and are associated with rain, thunderstorms, and the coming of the wet season. Wandjina are often depicted in a veil of dots, signifying rain, with prominent eyes and no mouth. It is said the Wandjina communicate through thought, and that if they had mouths, it would never stop raining. The animals that surround the Wandjina also hold significance in the artist's totem.



Kay Lindjuwanga

born 1957

Community:

Maningrida,

Northern Territory

Language: Kunwinjku

Kay Lindjuwanga was taught to paint by her husband, acclaimed artist John Mawurndjul (born c. 1952), whom she has assisted since the 1980s. Employing a technique typical of Arnhem Land painters, Lindjuwanga uses a long-haired brush to apply layers of precise parallel strokes in a crosshatched pattern. Her images are abstracted representations of significant sites in her Dreaming. Lindjuwanga also produces etchings, hollow logs, and carvings of *mimih*—mythical, mischievous creatures.



Dorothy Djukulul

born 1942

Community:

Ramingining, Northern Territory

Language: Ganalbingu

Dorothy Djukulul was born into a family of prominent artists and is one of a small number of women who were taught to paint by their fathers in the 1960s.



Galuma Maymuru

born 1951

Community:

Yirrkala, Northern Territory

Language: Manggalili

Galuma Maymuru was strongly encouraged as an artist by her father, Narritjin (c. 1914–1981), and belongs to the first generation of Yolngu women who became major artists. Anthropologist Howard Morphy eloquently describes the significance of art to Maymuru: “To Galuma, art is an act of memory and a process of transmission, in which she passes Manggalili law on to a new generation of her clan. Equally, it is a spiritual and aesthetic exploration of her homeland.”



Wolpa Wanambi

born 1970

Community:

Yirrkala, Northern Territory

Language: Marrakulu

With great control and painterly deliberation, Wolpa Wanambi relates the narrative of the Marrakulu clan. The story recounts the beginning of the epic journey of the two Wagilag (or Wawilak) Sisters through many different clan countries.



Kitty Kantilla

c. 1928–2003

Community:

Milikapiti, Melville Island,
Northern Territory

Language: Tiwi

It's from the old times. –*Kitty Kantilla speaking of her work.*

One of the most acclaimed artists of her generation, Kitty Kantilla possessed strong compositional skills and an assuredness of design. Her traditional images deftly balance shape and color, patterned and solid areas, in a refined and almost decorative way. In 1997, Kantilla boldly reversed the Tiwi tradition of painting on black ground, and began painting on white instead. The resulting images are unusually delicate and airy.



Jean Baptist Apuatimi

born 1940

Community:

Nguiu, Bathurst Island,
Northern Territory

Language: Tiwi

Aside from her paintings, Jean Baptist Apuatimi is also renowned for her carved ironwood sculptures.



Gertie Huddleston

born c. 1933

Community:

Ngukurr,

Northern Territory

Language: Mara

Oh goodness [flowers] make me happy inside. Long time, when the missionaries were there [at Roper River] we used to do fancywork you know, tablecloth and needlework; big flowers, Waratah flowers all the bush flowers. I was champion for needlework and it looked like that [one of her paintings].

-Gertie Huddleston

In a striking contrast to most Aboriginal art, Gertie Huddleston employs a horizontal, or planar, point of view when layering her exuberantly colored landscapes. These works are representational, not symbolic, yet they are equally complex compositions. Huddleston spent her early life hunting and gathering with her family and was later educated at Roper River Mission, where she tended to animals, flowers, and other plants. She also learned the art of needlework, which is still reflected in the nature of her mark making.



Regina Wilson

born 1945

Community:

Peppimenarti,
Northern Territory

Language: Marathiel

Regina Wilson is the best known artist of the group of Peppimenarti women whose work is inspired by traditional weaving patterns. She often bases her work on memories of her grandparents' creations, including fishing nets.



Rosella Namok

born 1979

Community:

Lockhart River, Queensland

Language: Aangkum

I paint about country and people around me...about traditional culture...about things that happen, things we do...the weather... our isolated community. My recent paintings have been about how people live in our community and about country.

-Rosella Namok

Rosella Namok is the most acclaimed artist of the Lockhart River Art Gang. Instead of using brushes or sticks, Namok paints with her fingers—usually on canvas, sometimes paper—a practice that is inspired by traditional sand drawing. She has developed a range of symbolic shapes, including rectangles and ovals, that not only evoke traditional Aboriginal culture, but also address contemporary life in her community. Although Namok has been influenced by the modern and contemporary art she has seen at art galleries, she claims that “it’s listening to the old (Lockhart River) girls yarn that gives me the inspiration.”



Photograph: Natasha Harth
Courtesy: Queensland Art
Gallery, Brisbane

Judy Watson

born 1959

Community:

Brisbane, Queensland

Language: Waanyi

I get inspirations from my grandmother; I'm very close to her and very connected with her story through the matrilineal side of my family that's the Aboriginal side. And also country, just country everywhere, but particularly up in North West Queensland which is our area. I get really inspired and enriched by looking at collections in museums and art galleries around the place and by looking at other Aboriginal artists' work too; they're doing so much deadly stuff out there.

-Judy Watson

Art-school trained painter/printmaker Judy Watson was one of the three Aboriginal women artists included in the 1997 Venice Biennale. Her work traces her ancestral roots back to her great-grandmother and addresses issues related to women, politics, and the environment. Watson creates visual parables of her Aboriginal heritage, showing how history is embedded in the land, wounding and scarring it.



Julie Dowling

born 1969

Community:

Perth, Western Australia

Language: Badimaya-Yamatji-Noongar

Art-school trained artist Julie Dowling is taking Aboriginal art in the completely new direction of Western portraiture. Drawing on her family and community history, she creates portraits from life or imagines the likenesses of her subjects. Of special renown are her self-portraits, in which she reclaims her maternal ancestors.



Daisy Manybunharrawuy

born c. 1950

Community:

Ramingining, Northern Territory

Language: Liyagalawumirr

I was born and lived at Ngarrawundhu at Milingimbi . . . I still kept going at bark painting after I married Djembangu. My father used to tell me a story from the painting. My families were happy with that—all those old people . . . I use white clay from the beach; black from the tree from the bush; red and yellow from the beach. —*Daisy Manybunharrawuy*

Daisy Manybunharrawuy, who was also among those taught early on by their fathers, depicts the story of the Wagilag Sisters in finely detailed and complex visual narratives.