

Exhibition catalogue

Aboriginal Contemporary and Mangkaja Arts present

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

An exhibition of works on paper spanning more than a decade
by four of **Mangkaja Arts** leading living artists

Exhibition Opens 25 July 10am - 4pm

254 Bronte Road, Waverley, NSW



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ABORIGINAL CONTEMPORARY

Mangkaja Arts and Aboriginal Contemporary present *Looking Back, Looking Forward*, a unique exhibition of works on paper by Mangkaja's leading artists: Sonia Kurarra, Rosie Tarku King, Penny K-Lyons and Ngarralja Tommy May. The immediacy and directness of working on paper keeps Mangkaja artists returning to it as a medium. It is how they developed their visual language and vibrant ways of representing their Country.

Mangkaja Arts and Resource Centre is at Fitzroy Crossing in the West Kimberley region of WA. It began life over 30 years ago, when five Aboriginal language groups came together to learn English in order to better understand the letters they were receiving from government officials and the offers being made to them. Understanding the *Kartiya* (white man) was a way for them to obtain independence from them and one of the key members of the group was Ngarralja Tommy May. Mangkaja Arts grew out of this initial collective and the success of the 1991 Tandanya show encouraged Mangkaja artists to incorporate and go on to become a leading art centre in the vibrant Aboriginal art movement of the '90s.

Looking Back is to the Country where these four great artists grew up. Penny K Lyons and Rosie Tarku King are sisters and two of the last nomads from the Walmajarri language group to walk out of the Great Sandy Desert. Their paintings depict the Country they travelled and the events that happened to them. Tommy May also remembers this time, "I was big when I left my Country. I was already hunting by myself. I was with my young brother and my mother. My father had passed away by this time. I know these stories and these places in my Country". The knowledge they hold is significant to surviving in one of the harshest environments on earth and connects to an ancestral lineage that goes back beyond time.

Looking Forward, carries the places and stories from the past on an unbroken line into the future, keeping ancient knowledge and culture alive to carry forward for many generations.

Natalie McCarthy – Art Coordinator

Mangkaja Arts 2020

Sonia Kurarra



Martuwarra

Cat No: MAN94/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Acrylic matt paint on
BFK Rives 250gsm paper

\$2,330 – Framed

Sonia Kurarra



Martuwarra

Cat No: MAN92/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Acrylic matt paint on
BFK Rives 250gsm paper

\$2,330 – Framed

Sonia Kurarra

Martuwarra

Cat No: MAN98/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Mixed media on 150gsm
Bockingford paper

\$2,330 – Framed



Sonia Kurarra

Martuwarra

Cat No: MAN93/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Acrylic matt paint on
300gsm paper

\$2,330 – Framed



Sonia Kurarra



River and Palm Trees

Cat No: MAN05/09

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic paint on
150gsm Bockingford paper

\$2,330 – Framed

Rosie Tarku King



Partarta

Cat No: MAN273/04

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic
250gsm on Velin Arches

\$1,500 – Framed

Rosie Tarku King

Spinifex and the waterhole

Cat No: MAN290/08

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic

150gsm Bockingford paper

\$1,500 – Framed



Rosie Tarku King

Kayarlajati Jumu

Cat No: MAN96/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Devivan acrylic on
250gsm Velin Arches paper

\$1,500 – Framed



Ngarralja Tommy May

Jilji and Bila

Cat No: MAN110/20

Framed Size: 65cm x 65cm

Acrylic on 200gsm blk paper

\$1,200 – Framed



Ngarralja Tommy May

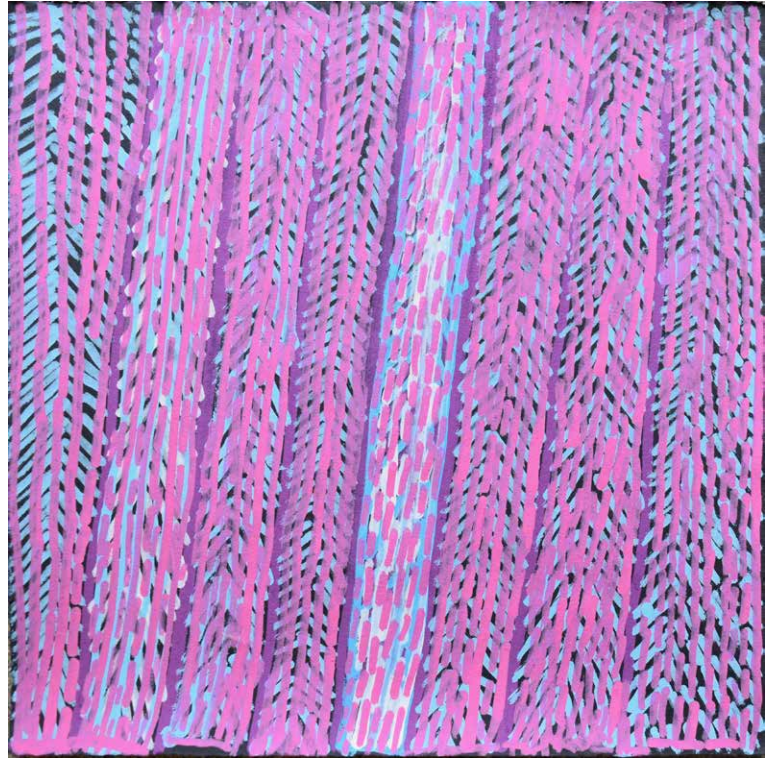
Jilji and Bila

Cat No: MAN111/20

Framed Size: 65cm x 65cm

Acrylic on 200gsm blk paper

\$1,200 – Framed



Ngarralja Tommy May



This is flat Country

Cat No: MAN683/10

Framed Size: 68cm x 88cm

Acrylic matt paint on
300gsm S&W paper

\$1,580 – Framed

Penny K-Lyons

Japirnka

Cat No: MAN108/20

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic on
BFK Rives 250gsm paper

\$1,340 – Framed



Penny K-Lyons

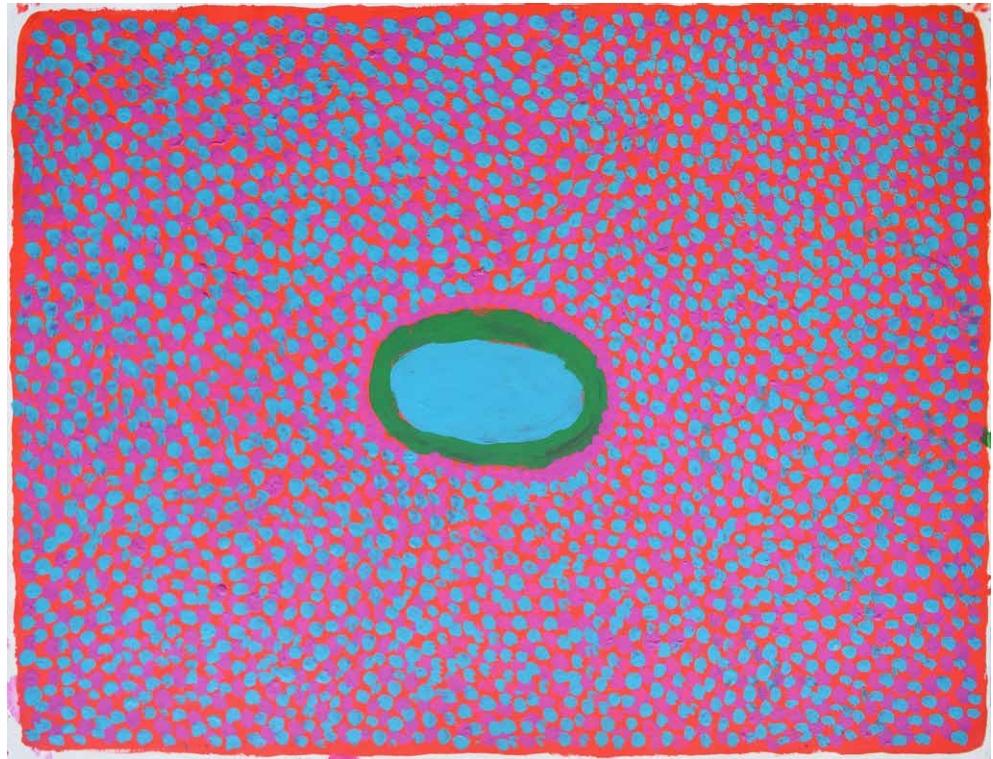
Jumu (soak water)

Cat No: MAN76/09

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic on
Fabriano 200gsm paper

\$1,340 – Framed



Penny K-Lyons

Untitled

Cat No: MAN581/10

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic on
Fabriano 200gsm paper

\$1,340 – Framed



Penny K-Lyons

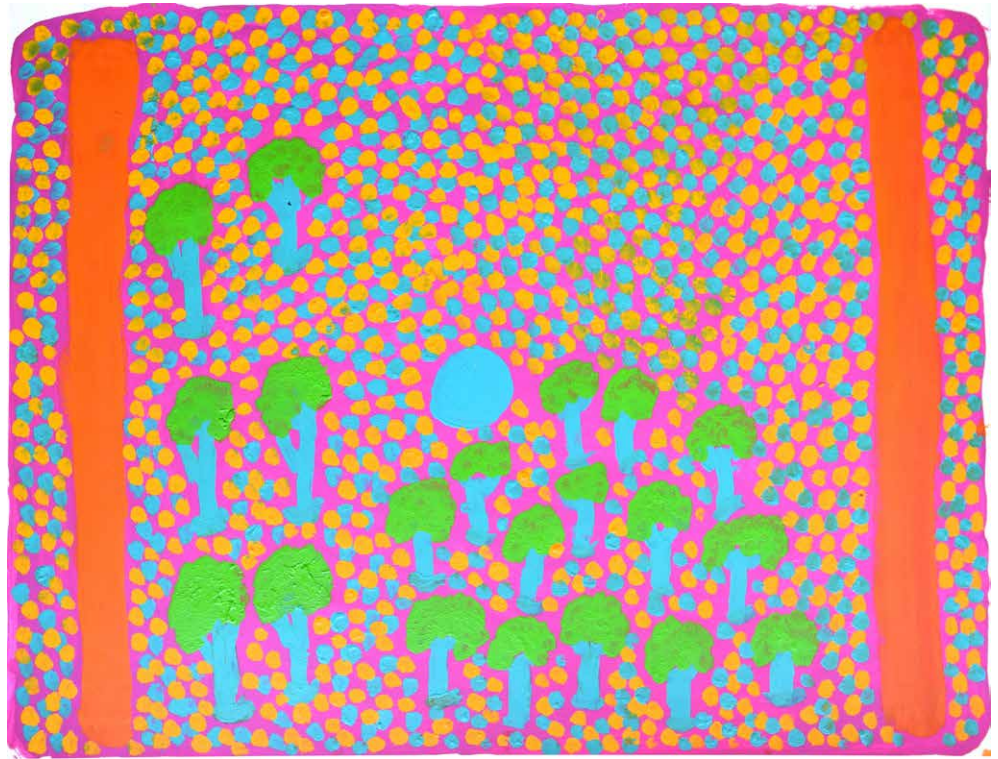
Kurjalpartu

Cat No: MAN968/08

Framed Size: 94cm x 74cm

Atelier acrylic on
Fabriano 200gsm paper

\$1,340 – Framed



Sonia Kurarra

Born 1952, Noonkanbah, Western Australia. Lives and works Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia. Walmajarri, Western Desert region.

Sonia Kurarra grew up in river country at Yungngora (Noonkanbah), alongside Daisy Japulija. She began painting at Mangkaja Arts, Fitzroy Crossing, in the early 1990s, working mostly on paper. Since 2008 Kurarra has worked predominantly on canvas. She held her first solo exhibition in 1990, and has featured in many group and solo shows since then. Kurarra paints the sandy billabong country along the stretch of the Fitzroy River that runs directly behind the community, including gapi (fish), parrmarr (rocks), ngurti (coolamon) and karli (boomerang). She paints and repaints her Country in abstracted colours and shapes, revealing her understanding of gestural narrative.

Rosie Tarku King

Born 1932, at a jumu (soak water) called Payinjarra in the Great Sandy Desert.

I walked out from the desert with my husband when I was a young girl. I left my mother and brother *Kumanjayi* [deceased] Pijaju behind at Japingka. My husband had two wives, my older sister and myself. These two passed away a long time ago, here in the river country at Brooking Springs Station.

When we left the desert we walked for a long time. We were walking and hunting all the way. We killed pussycat and *wirlka* [sand goanna] for food but no kangaroo. I was walking and worrying all the time about my mother but I kept going. My husband and my sister were both cheeky. They hit me for no reason. I was crying for my mother. I got away from them once. But they were too cheeky to me and told me, "come on you have to go". I told them, "No, I want to go back to my mother". They kept telling me "No, you have to keep going".

I was frightened but I came out at Old Bililluna. There was a plane landing right there and I was frightened of that plane. From there, all of us kids went walking and looking at the plane which had landed. I didn't know any English and so I just looked at the *kartiya* [Europeans]. We kept going and we saw *kartiya* getting water in a bucket from a well. This was new to me too because it was the first time I had seen this.

We had no shoes. We were wearing *yakapiri* [bush used to make sandals to protect feet from the hot ground]. After that, a motorcar came from Moola Bulla to Old Bililluna and took us to Moola Bulla. We were frightened in the car. We hadn't seen one before. And we didn't know anyone there either. I met Manmarria Daisy Andrews and her first son at Moola Bulla.

I talked only Juwaliny when I came out from the desert but today I speak Juwaliny, Walmajarri, Kriol and English. I have been painting with Mangkaja Arts for a long time.

Ngarralja Tommy May

Born 1935, Yarrnkurnja in the Great Sandy Desert. He dances and sings Kurtal, a ceremony relating to the main jila [living waterhole] in his country. He is also a painter and printmaker.

Ngarralja is fluent in Wangkajunga, Walmajarri and English and writes Walmajarri. He is a founding member of the Karrayili Adult Education Centre where he learnt to read and write his own language and English.

Ngarralja is an important person for art and culture in Fitzroy Crossing. He is a former Deputy Chairman of Mangkaja Arts and former Chairman of Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC). Ngarralja was also an executive for twenty one years on the Association of Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA) Board of Directors.

Ngarralja lives with his children at Mindi Rardi Community in Fitzroy Crossing.

Nyangarni Penny K Lyons

Born 1932, at Wanywurtu under a tutujarti [desert walnut] tree. She grew up there with her family of one father, two mothers, one brother and two sisters. There is a rock hole with spring water at Wanywurtu where Nyangarni remembers going walkabout for goanna and pussycat [feral cat].

Nyangarni's family and other groups migrated north to the cattle station country surrounding the Fitzroy Valley. When they left the desert she was a girl in her early teens. During the journey she lost her mother's sister, then her father and mother. Nyangarni became distressed about losing her parents and wanted to keep looking for them. Her brother kumanjayi [deceased] Pijaju got angry with her and left Nyangarni and her little sister at nearby Milidjidee and kept going.

Nyangarni's beautiful paintings show the traditional waterholes and hunting grounds of the Great Sandy Desert where she and her family lived up until the early 1950s.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Please join us for the opening:

Saturday 25 July 10am – 4pm
254 Bronte Road, Waverley 2024



ABORIGINAL CONTEMPORARY

Please note all artworks are sold framed.

For any enquiries please contact Nichola on [0450 929 183](tel:0450929183) or nichola@aboriginalcontemporary.com.au