

# TRUTH: THEN NOW EVERYWHEN

1 JULY - 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

## Earl Kemmare Hayes (born 1988)

Western Arrente

### Desert Cowboy Band 2018

Found metal, wire, tape, particle board, sand, acrylic paint, party lights, battery,

36 x 56 x 36 cm

Made at Undoolya community, NT

## Mick Rictor (born c. 1956)

Spinifex

### Untitled 2018

110 x 85 cm

### Untitled 2019

137 x 110 cm

### Mamu Tjina 2018

110 x 85 cm

### Pila Nguru 2018

137 x 110 cm

### Pila Nguru 2017

137 x 110 cm

### Ngura 2018

110 x 85 cm

### Untitled 2019

137 x 90 cm

### Pila Nguru 2018

110 x 85 cm

Acrylic on linen

Painted at Tjuntjuntjara, WA

Mick Rictor and his immediate family were the last of the desert dwellers to experience first contact. Remarkably, they did not meet white people until 1986. They lived a traditional life in the Great Victoria Desert, while other Spinifex people were removed to Cundeelee Mission at the time of the Maralinga nuclear bomb tests. "We see in each painting a miniature of gigantic lives. Each captures a fragment of a spiritual dimension otherwise difficult to grasp... It holds true and will endure while the men and traditions that gave rise to it will not... (their) knowledge and life experiences will never be fully grasped, will never be equaled, and will never be seen again", (Scott Cane, author, First Footprints, on the paintings of senior Spinifex men).

## Mrs J. Chambers (1958-2022)

### Nancy Nanana Jackson (born 1953)

Ngaanyatjarra

### Tutjurangara Massacre (Circus Waters Rockhole Massacre) 2018

Minarri tjanpi (wild harvested grass), raffia, wool, wire  
Made at Warakurna, WA

Tutjurangara Massacre (Circus Waters Rockhole Massacre), a nine-piece sculpture woven of wild harvested native grasses by artists Judith Yinyika Chambers and Nancy Nanana Jackson, powerfully asks the all-important question, "Who owns the Truth?". It depicts a massacre which is little known to outsiders, at best a "whispering in our hearts" in the words of historian Henry Reynolds. But what happened in the early 20th century at Circus Waters near Warakurna in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands remains a living memory of visceral sadness for descendants of the killed and their families, who include both the artists. Tutjurangara Massacre is four generations of oral history made tangible.

## Kunmanara (Niningka Munkuri) Lewis (1945-2020)

Pitjantjatjara

### Lasseter 2016

80 x 30 cm

### Camping half way to Alice Springs at Imampa policemen arrested my family 2016

Acrylic paint, pyrograph, plywood, 90 x 90 cm  
Made at Mutitjulu, NT

### Teapot 2015

Native grass, raffia, emu feathers

### Featherfoot Slippers, 2015

Native grass, raffia, emu feathers  
Made at Mutitjulu, NT

Four of Niningka Lewis's ongoing series *ara irititja* (true stories of olden days) illustrating her life growing up in and around Ernabella Mission, in the far north of South Australia in the era of early contact.

## **Belle Karirrka Davidson (1942-2017)**

Ngaanyatjarra

### **The Road Between Leanora and Wiluna 2016**

Acrylic on linen, 152 x 75 cm

Made at Papulankutja, WA

“Mr Wells took us, me and Dulcie Watson, from Warburton to the Goldfields to work – first time – we had little English. I was about 16 years old and they sent me to a station north of Leanora, east of Wiluna, on the Wiluna road, run by Mr and Mrs Edville. I think it was called Weebo Station. That is the white building there. After not being there very long the station wife was giving us dinner one night and she really growled at us both. Dulcie broke a plate and she wanted us to pay for it. We didn't like this at all, so we decided to run away. We ran away on a Sunday. That thick brown line is the main dirt road, but we went our own way through the bush. We didn't have much with us, just a blanket. Later we had to go close to the road and while we were sitting in the bushes we saw Mr and Mrs Edville drive past us four times but they didn't see us. There was a well near the road and we were really thirsty, so we took the strings from our dresses and tied them to a can to draw water from the well, but later in the day we came across a windmill that we could have drunk water from. We camped near that well and the next morning when we woke there was some sheep looking at us. Dulcie got frightened and thought they would attack her but of course they didn't. We were getting tired so kept stopping for rests. We kept going along, walking and resting, walking and resting. We crossed a creek and late in the day we came to another station house. The owners kept us there and rang around and the old station boss tried to take us but Mr and Mrs Blyth came from the Leanora Mission and wouldn't let that station man take us, so they took us to Leanora instead. Yes, I didn't get frightened running away.”

## **Vincent Namatjira (born 1983)**

Western Arrerente

### **Albert and Rex Painting 2013**

Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 76 cm

### **Ininti 2013**

Acrylic on canvas, 61 x 45 cm

Painted at indulkana, SA

Vincent is exploring his artistic identity and the legacy of his great-grandfather Albert Namatjira. In his still life (above) he explores the oeuvre of his namesake Vincent van Gogh by painting his own version of the famous Sunflowers, this time re-imagined as an ininti plant, local flora from the Hermannsburg area that Albert painted so often. In Albert and Rex Painting he depicts artist Rex Battarbee, who introduced Albert to watercolour painting, but the two are depicted not as teacher and student but as equals.

## **Jimmy Donegan (born c. 1940)**

Pitjantjatjara

### **Pukara 2018**

Acrylic on Linen, 183 x 168 cm

### **Pukara 2017**

Acrylic on linen, 183 x 155 cm

Painted at Kalka, SA

As his distinguished NATSIAA-winning career comes to a close, this painter, carver and senior cultural leader is now increasingly frail, making the commitment to truth telling revealed in these two nearly-two-metre high canvases all the more remarkable. “Solemn, emphatic and dazzlingly illuminated”, said writer Nicolas Rothwell of Mr D's 2010 award-winning work, (The Australian, 2010); these are even more so, energised to a level that could be described as psychedelic.

## **Vincent Namatjira (born 1983)**

Western Arrerente

### **Captain Cook 2014**

Acrylic on linen, 76 x 101

Painted at Indulkana, SA

Vincent Namatjira, great grandson of the famous painter Albert Namatjira, is rapidly becoming one of Australia's best-known portraitists, winning the Archibald Prize in 2021. It's not unusual for Australian contemporary artists of all backgrounds to reference Cook in their work, often in an adversarial way. But in this painting Vincent uniquely, and generously, reverses the usual 'colonial gaze' and draws Cook into the Aboriginal life-world of the Dreaming. Cook is standing on the deck of the Endeavour but is seeing the red earth and white ghost gums of Central Australia – Vincent's own Country – drawing him into the Everywhen.

## **Tjinkuma Tjilya (1940-2016)**

Pitjantjatjara

### **Tjantamata 2004**

Acrylic on linen, 180 x 122 cm

Painted at Irrunytju (Wingellina) WA

## **Dennis Stirling (born c.1960)**

Anmatyerr

### **Ringer 2014**

Wire and raffia

Made at Alice Springs Correctional Facility, NT

### **Rona Panangka Rubuntja (born 1970)**

Arrernte

#### **Alice Springs Rodeo 2006**

Terracotta clay, hand-painted underglaze

45 x 19 x 19 cm

Made at Hermannsburg/Ntaria, NT

Cowboys are powerful symbols of Aboriginal resistance, pride and resilience in central and northern Australia, where the cattle industry was built on the exploitation of unpaid Aboriginal labour. The Pilbara Strike of the 1940s and the Wave Hill Walk-off in the 1960s were instrumental in securing land rights as their example of resistance inspired momentum for change. These three works attest to the continuing strength of Aboriginal cowboy culture.

### **Katjarra Butler (born 1946)**

Pintubi

#### **Ngamurru 2016**

Acrylic on linen, 178 x 147 cm

Made at Tjukurla, WA

“The painting shows the two waterholes of Ngamurru. It is not like a spring - the waterholes dry out after a while. At these waterholes many women were staying here for a short while in the creation time. These women were Nangala, my mothers. Another group of women, a group of Nungurrayi and Nangala, were travelling to Marrpirn / Kiwirrkura while the Nangala women were at Ngamurru. At Ngamurru the Nangala women collected, cooked and ate the bush tucker wanpurru that grows on sandhills. They then set off to the east to Papunya and Ngartan.”

### **Marlene Wheeler (born 1935)**

Western Arrernte

#### **Two Years On Dialysis 2015**

Acrylic on board, 60 x 80 cm

Made at Alice Springs, NT

“There’s Flynn Drive and Gap Road – these are the two dialysis clinics I have been going to for the past two years. The dialysis takes four hours. I go there three times a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This treatment has been going on for two years. Each day there might be 12 patients at a time. When one lot comes off the machines, another lot comes in.”

Marlene is still undergoing dialysis three times a week. She is now into her seventh year of dialysis.

### **Molly Miller (born 1957)**

Pitjantjatjara

#### **Tjilpi Pikatjara (Old Man with a Disability) 2015**

Tjanpi (desert grasses), raffia, acrylic yarn

63 x 65 x 30 cm

Made at Kalka, SA

“This wati (man) has a disability, diabetes. He’s a tjilpi (old man).”

Molly Miller’s tjanpi figure has lost a foot to amputation. She depicts a disease more and more common throughout Aboriginal communities: the endemic spread of diabetes. Another work nearby, the painting by Marlene Wheeler, tells of the related issue of high rates of renal failure. Together these diseases are having a devastating impact on communities, especially where health services are minimal and treatment is only available hundreds or sometimes thousands of kilometres away from family and Country.

### **Doris Thomas (born c.1951)**

Luritja/Yankunytjatjara

#### **Pension Day, Titjikala 2016**

Acrylic on linen, 153 x 122.5 cm

Made at Alice Springs, NT

“Pension day is a big day for community in Titjikala.

I raised my family in Titjikala so it has a special place in my heart. I left in 2002, moving to Amoonguna to be near my grandchildren. Since then I’m a dialysis patient. I don’t get back to Titjikala. I have to live in a hostel in Alice Springs. But I remember how it was so well. I know from family and friends, it’s the same.

Everyone from all around - outstations and in town - drive down to the main street in town on Pension Day. They visit Centrelink, do their banking at the Community Store, do their shopping, visit the nurse at the Health Centre, or the Doctor if he’s visiting, they visit each other, and they visit the art centre, where I used to paint.

All the dogs follow everyone around town. They’re looking for treats. Everyone is happy to be there. The day sees everyone smiling, dogs too! There’s lots of cars, lots of people, lots of babies, lots of kids, and lots of dogs. Everyone is smiling. The streets are busy. It feels really good to see everyone out and about.

And then at night time, same day, everyone goes to sing along, in language - Pitjantjatjara - at the Lutheran Church – singing Gospel. That feeling in my chest – feels really good – when everyone is singing together.

The music goes right through me. Then singing finished until next time. Everyone goes home until next time. Everyone settles into sleepy time again.

As soon as mobile dialysis services are here, I’ll be going back there to visit, and I can enjoy Pension Day, and singing Gospel in language with community, again.”

**Doris Thomas (born c.1951)**

Luritja/Yankunytjatjara

**Olden days at Maryvale Station 2018**

Acrylic on canvas, 65 x 62 cm

**Ration day, Olden Times, Maryvale Station 2019**

Acrylic on canvas, 31 x 61 cm

“These days were the beginning of Titjikala community – it was our village on Maryvale Station then. We had a big mob of camels – my father was cameleer. Everyone got excited on ration day! Everyone would head to the station store house to pick up their rations and put them in flour bags. See those eagles? They belong to that place. It’s their Country. Country holds their story. You always see them there.”

Titjikala community had its origins as the camp where Aboriginal people lived who worked on Maryvale Station. Doris lived there for most of her life and witnessed many changes, including government-subsidised issues of flour, sugar, tea, blankets and tobacco that unpaid Aboriginal pastoral workers ‘earned’ as their income.

**Wally Wilfred (born 1958)**

Wagilak

**Balamumu Prisoners 2017**

Wood sculpture, acrylic paint, chain, padlocks, neck clamps

Made at Ngukurr, NT

“This story is from East Arnhem Land but it is also a story from all over Australia. It is a story about two laws. One law is handed down by ancestors, it is written on the body and it stays the same. The other law is written on paper and it always changes.” – Wally Wilfred. Summary of story as told by Chair of Ngukurr Arts, Walter Kolbong Rogers: “In 1933, five Japanese trepangers (fishermen) and two white trepangers were speared at Woodah Island in Blue Mud Bay. The fishermen violated territorial rights, threatened local people with guns and raped women. Constable Albert Stuart McColl arrived from Darwin to investigate the killings but he was also speared and killed. Soon after, the accused men – Dhakiyarr a respected leader and three other Balamumu men, were taken in chains through Roper Mission, where Ngukurr is today. The three men were sentenced to twenty years imprisonment but Dhakiyarr was sentenced to death. His case went before the Supreme Court and was eventually dismissed. He was supposed to receive a police escort back to his country but he disappeared and was never found again. It is believed he was murdered.”

**After the Rescue 2021**

Acrylic on artist paper, 56 x 76 cm

Made at Ngukurr, NT

In 1911 NT police officer Constable Johns arrested Ayaiga, also known as ‘Neighbour’ and three other Aboriginal men accused of robbing a white man’s hut. Johns shackled the four prisoners and they began the 32-kilometre journey to Roper Bar Police Station on foot, escorted by Johns on horseback. Arriving at the flooded Wilton River, the prisoners crossed but when Johns followed his horse kicked him and he went under. Risking his own life, Ayaiga, still in shackles, dived in and pulled Johns to safety. After saving Constable Johns, Ayaiga’s charges were dropped. News of Ayaiga’s courage travelled and in February 1912 King George V awarded him the Albert Medal for Lifesaving, the British Empire’s highest award for bravery, which was presented to Ayaiga in Darwin. These events took place amidst colonial violence in the Gulf Country – massacre, dispossession and degradation – the reality lived by Aboriginal peoples in the region. During the rapid pastoral settlement of Gulf Country, between 1885-1910 over 600 Aboriginal peoples were killed (about one-sixth of the population) and many more displaced. Those like Ayaiga who remained were subject to intrusive and paternalistic laws. Even after Ayaiga received his award, NT officials did not allow him to keep the medal. The layered story of Ayaiga’s compassion and courage has been retold in numerous variations and shaped by many people. In *After the Rescue*, Wilfred has depicted Ayaiga, Mounted Constable Johns and King George V. Alluding to the historical and cultural complexity of Ayaiga’s narrative, the three figures from starkly different places and life experiences stand next to each other in a simple configuration, interacting without understanding one another. *After the Rescue* opens Ayaiga’s narrative up to critical re-interpretation in the present. (Artist statement written by Tristan Harwood in consultation with Wally Wilfred and Cultural Advisor Walter Kolbong Rogers).

**Dhakiyarr versus the King 2021**

Acrylic on archival art paper, 56 x 76 cm

Made at Ngukurr, NT

**Vincent Namatjira (born 1983)**

Western Arrernte

**Settlers 2013**

Acrylic on linen, 51 x 61

Painted at Indulkana, SA

**Kunmanara (David) Frank (1944 - 2021)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Policeman Story 2015**

Acrylic on linen, 91 x 122 cm

**Policeman Story 2015**

Acrylic on linen, 40 x 101 cm

David Frank was a senior cultural leader and a ngangkari – a traditional healer – who for many years was a Community Policeman in remote Indulkana in the APY Lands of South Australia. So disturbed was he by the alcohol-fuelled interactions between local community members and non-Aboriginal police, he refused to paint the subject after making these two paintings. He nonetheless proudly used his ngangkari skills to mediate and mitigate the violence.

**Trevor Turbo Brown (1967 - 2017)**

Latje Latje

**Dingo Mother and her Pups at the Waterhole**

Acrylic on canvas, 152 x 91cm

Painted at Melbourne, Vic

“When I paint I feel like I’m in the Dreamtime and can see all the animals and birds that live there.”

**Noreen Parker (born 1964)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Maralinga 2019**

Acrylic on found 44 gallon drum lid

58 x 58 cm

Painted at Wingellina, WA

“When my mother was a young girl about 15 years old, the people were living in the bush in wiltjas in the Spinifex Country (in the Great Victoria Desert). My mother told me this story, how the people were all sitting down when they saw a big light and then lots of smoke. The smoke just went up and up and up. The people were frightened. They thought it was a walpa pulka (big storm) or the wanampi (rainbow serpent creation ancestor). My uncle, my mother’s brother, had gone to hunt bush tucker in Maralinga Country. He never came back. He died from that bomb. That’s a true story.”

**Fred Grant (born 1943)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Tjaltu 2017**

Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 230 cm

Painted at Tjuntjuntjara, WA

This is the major site of Tjaltu, a site that forms part of the Wati Kutjara Tjukurpa (Two Men Creation Line). This is an epic story that traverses vast tracts of Spinifex Country as it follows two brothers in their search for wives. Wulya maru (black nosed monitor lizard) and tinka (sand goanna) are the creation beings that metamorphise between animal and man as they shape the landscape, to leave the physical and moral reminders of their presence. Here at Tjaltu are two rockholes that are the brothers still there today. Fred has also painted the many sites and travelling tracks nearby that the brothers visited on their way to Tjaltu.

A painting for the ages, by a senior man of the Spinifex people, Pitjantjatjara speakers from the Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia. You can walk into this painting and live within its embrace. It is the Country it depicts; its skin is the land itself; and the skin of the artist, for whom this is a self-portrait, forever one with his Country.

**Carlene West (1944 - 2021)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Tjitjiti 2015**

Acrylic on linen, 137 x 200 cm

Made at Tjuntjuntjara, WA

Tjitjiti is minimal in the western sense of its use of negative space and white-and-cream tonal effects, capturing the pearlescent surface of a massive salt lake. Yet in reality it’s not minimal at all. In fact it’s a highly charged canvas rich in cultural meaning. Carlene’s late-career work, of which this is a rare example, became a marker for just how expressive desert art can be, amply conveying the highly sacred nature of the place called Tjitjiti and the infinity of time it enfolds.

“This is a painting representing my country of Tjitjiti, a large salt lake. It is the site of the ancestor women. Here the Two Women are walking across the big salt lake with a child when they are called by a stranger, a Quoll Man, to hand over the child. The women run to escape but the Quoll Man threw many spears and eventually one hit, impaling the two women, together with the child. This is a sad story. The two women can still be seen today standing at Tjitjiti.”

**Mikey Gurruwiri (born 1998)**

Yolgnu

**Petrol Sniffer 2012**

Print on artist paper, 30 x 21 cm

Made at Yirrkala, NT

**Kunmanara (Niningka Munkuri) Lewis (1945-2020)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Many white people came to Australia by boat and shot Anangu** 2012

Acrylic paint on paper, 29 x 39 cm

Painted at Mutitjulu, NT

**Damien Shen (born 1976)**

Ngarrindjeri/Chinese

**De Ngarrindjeri Corporis Fabrica (On the Fabric of the Ngarrindjeri Body)** 2015

Etching

65 x 35.5 cm

Printed Adelaide, SA

**David Jones (born 1969)**

Butchulla

**Strung Up** 2014

Intaglio print a la poupee

70 x 50 cm

Printed at Brisbane, Qld

**Dominic Bramall-White (born 1970)**

Mannalargenna, Plangermaireener

**Sir Governor Swan, Arthur Phillip** 2016

Plywood intaglio, 58 x 42 cm

Made at Frankston, Victoria

Arthur Phillip led the invading force that established a British penal colony in New South Wales. He is depicted as a white swan in the land of black swans, a stranger in a strange land, not at all the powerful figure in the well-known 1786 portrait by Francis Wheatley on which the artist has based his etching.

**Daniel Kelly (born 1964)**

Wathaurong

**Genocide** 2014

Pyrography on paper, 38 x 54 cm

Made at Frankston, Victoria

**Fuck Racism, What About Genocide** 2014

Pyrography on paper, 38 x 54 cm

Made at Frankston, Victoria

**Irene Mbitjana Entata (1946 - 2014)**

Arrernte

**Mission Days** 2013

Terracotta clay, handpainted underglaze,

23 x 12 x 12 cm

Made at Hermannsburg/Ntaria, NT

**Daniel Kelly (born 1964)**

Wathaurong

**Straya** 2019

Ochre and squid ink on paper, 71 x 100 cm

Made at Frankston, Victoria

**Jim Stanley (1927-2015)**

Kamilaroi

**Australia, Land of Milk and Honey** 2014

Pen and pencil on paper, 26 x 43 cm

Made at Moree, NSW

**Kunmanara (Mumu Mike) Williams (1952-2019)**

Pitjantjatjara

**Ananguku Map Wiya** 2017

Marker pen and ink on found map, 55 x 84cm

Made at Mimili, SA

“We don’t need a map! Or whitefella’s bitumen roads – we can travel the way we always have. Anangu (we Aboriginal people) know their country, their Tjukurpa and sacred sites. We can travel at night, guided by the rising moon and the stars – the Seven Sisters and the Morning Star.”

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