



**DESERT +
COAST:**

**SEVEN
ELDER**

**ABORIGINAL
PAINTERS**

SALON 94



Australia

YOLŃU

KAIADILT

PINTUPI

PITJANTJATJARA

- Betty Muffler
- Maringka Burton
- Mantua Nangala
- Yukultji Napangati
- Nongirrŋa Marawili
- Dhambit Ruypu Mununggurr
- Mirdidingkingathi
- Juwarnda Sally Gabori

Desert + Coast: Seven Elder Aboriginal Painters

Essay by: Shanyssa McConville

From mythological, biblical, and supernatural attributions, the number seven has diverse connotations in cultures all around the world. For some First Nations communities in Australia, it represents the number of sisters in an important cultural astronomy story. For others, it is the number of seasons that dictate movement and hunting practices across one calendar year. For me, it reflects the generations in my family led by strong Eastern Arrernte matriarchs. The varied significance of this number is well-known in many Indigenous communities; it is thus appropriate and special that *Desert + Coast* exhibits the work of seven senior female artists.

The Aboriginal women in this exhibition are ingenious senior painters who come from different parts of the country. While Australia is home to over 250 Indigenous language groups, these artists represent but a select few. The southernmost pair are Pitjantjatjara artists Betty Muffler and Maringka Burton, who live in the APY (Anangu Pitjantjara Yunkatjajara) Lands. This land is managed by Traditional Owners and occupies dry topography in the hot central Australian desert. The landscape is abundant with red dirt, the coarse grass of tumbleweed-like spinifex, and a rich display of flora and fauna. Home to over two thousand Anangu (Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, and Yankunytjara) people, there are seven major art centers here across one hundred thousand square kilometers (62,137 miles²). Neighboring this language group is the land of the Pintupi, which has similarly dry terrain dispersed with mountain ranges and rock formations. The town of Kiwirrkurra, where Mantua Nangala and Yukultji Napangati reside, is the most remote Aboriginal community in Australia. Home to just under two hundred people, the closest major town is over eight hundred kilometers (497 miles) away. While these four artists are the closest geographically, their lifestyles remain extremely diverse due to differing resources and longstanding cultural traditions.

At the top of the North Territory is Arnhem Land, the home of Dhambit Mununggurr and the late Nongirrŋa Marawili. Spanning from the East Alligator River around the coast to Port Roper in the Gulf of Carpentaria, this is a tropical savanna with a wet, rainy summer (November–March) and dry winter (April–October). Arnhem Land provides its more than twelve thousand Yolŋu residents with a plethora of inland vegetation, wildlife, and rock art sites, as well as prime fishing locations along the coast. Over five hundred kilometers (310 miles) southeast, at the southern edge of the Gulf of Carpentaria, is Bentinck Island, where Mirdidingkingathi

Juwarnda Sally Gabori was born. The Kaiadilt people who resided here until environmental disasters rendered the island uninhabitable in 1948 were among the most isolated Indigenous coastal groups in Australia; at the time, less than one hundred people were living on the island. Unlike Aboriginal people in the desert, Yolŋu and Kaiadilt communities heavily relied upon the sea for prosperity and trade. While these are only a few small regions that Indigenous communities occupy in Australia, it is important to acknowledge their physical and cultural diversity.

While they come from vastly different landscapes, the seven women in this exhibition are united by their practice. Their painting is a form of storytelling—specifically, a way to capture memories of their respective desert or coastal Country. More than the physical landscape, Country comprises sacred places of significance for First Nations people, ancestral homelands occupied for upwards of 65,000 years, songlines that traverse the land and waterways, creation stories, ceremonial locations and protocols, men’s and women’s places, lore, and so much more. Connection to Country was paramount for Aboriginal people during the assimilation era (largely the twentieth century), which saw countless First People displaced from their lands and forced to reside on government or religious missions, stations, and reserves. This displacement diminished many people’s ability to physically connect with ancestral homelands. Much of the Indigenous art produced during and after this time has thus been an exercise in preserving Country.

First Nations people in Australia have been painters, weavers, and sculptors for thousands of years, but have only been recognized as contemporary artists in the last century. Rock art and body painting with ochre and ephemeral sand or ground drawings are just some of the practices pervasive across the country before British invasion in 1788. It was not until Indigenous communities had access to Western materials and pushed for the establishment of art centers in the mid-twentieth century that many of these traditions were transferred to new mediums like canvas. As assimilation initiatives prohibited Indigenous language and ceremonies, segregated parents from their children, and forced Western religion, dress, and protocols upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, many looked for opportunities to preserve their remaining cultural knowledge. Art provided not only an outlet to create a physical memory of Country, ceremony, and traditions, but a way to safeguard this important knowledge from further destruction—and later pass it on to future generations who

may not have had the opportunity to live free of colonial interference. The establishment of physical art centers also enabled Indigenous people to come together, be with kin, practice creativity, and reminisce about better times.

The first Indigenous art center in Australia was established for Anangu women at the Ernabella Mission in 1948. Women here produced gouache paintings, floor rugs, batik, woven *tjanpi* (harvested spinifex grass), and sculptures, while constantly experimenting and inventing until they made the transition to acrylic on canvas. Few Aboriginal women were encouraged to make paintings prior to 1986. It was not until more centers were created in the Central and Western Desert from the mid-1980s onward—namely at Yuendumu, Lajamanu, and Balgo—that female artists were empowered to develop their practice. While the world-renowned Papunya Tula Artists Pty. Ltd. company was operational in 1972, women like Mantua Nangala and Yukultji Napangati did not paint independently with this collective until after the late 1980s. Though Aboriginal men were, in parts of Australia, the first to experiment with the arts, it was the women who emerged thereafter—including Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Makinti Napanangka, Eubena Nampitjin, Lorna Fencer Napurrula, Bessie Nakamarra Sims, Judy Napangardi Watson, and many others—who propelled First Nations art into a new era with scale, figuration, and color experimentation. Quickly, the world learned that Indigenous art practices are constantly evolving, and not confined to anything produced hitherto.

Aboriginal women have been instrumental in diversifying practices and challenging public perceptions about the scope of Indigenous art. The works exhibited in *Desert + Coast* represent some of the finest examples of Aboriginal female artistry. The pieces created by these seven women—specific to their life experiences and connection to Country—effectively debunk stereotypes that all Aboriginal painting is synonymous (i.e., dot painting). These women take great pride in their practice, and the global display of their art is a way for Indigenous people to reassert their sovereignty to mass audiences, demanding the world acknowledge we are still here and determined to remain strong in culture and creativity despite the atrocities of colonization. This subsequently enables global knowledge consumption: audiences are informed about the diversity of Indigenous art, the importance of culture and Country today, and the prevalence of diverse practices across Australia.

PITJANTJATJARA



Betty Muffler
Maringka Burton

(b. 1944)

(b. 1950)



Betty Muffler
*Ngangkari Ngura (Healing
Country), 2023*

Acrylic on linen
65 3/4 x 59 3/4 inches
(167 x 152 cm)
(BMu 2)

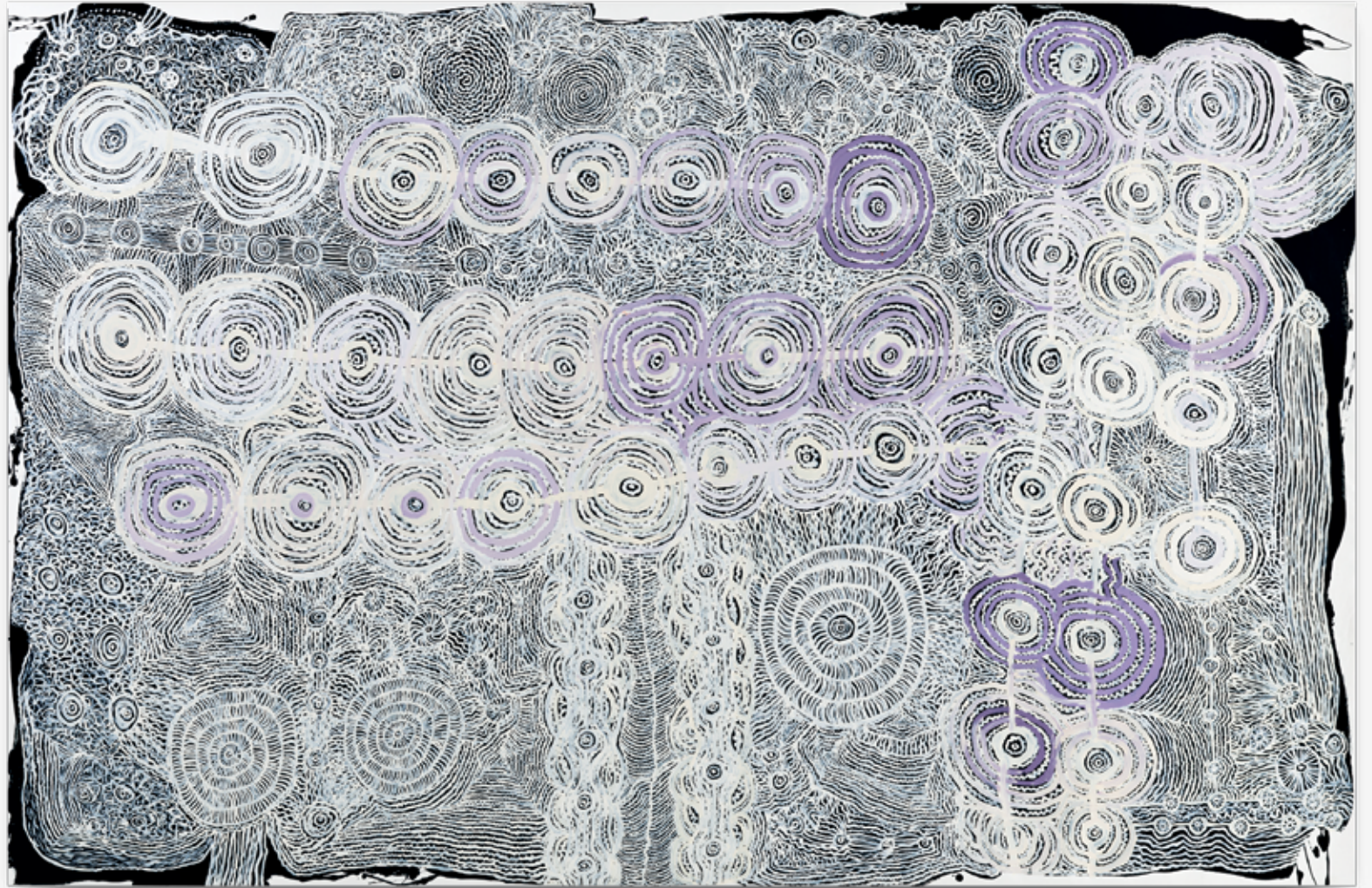
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*Ngangkari Ngura (Healing
Country), 2023*

Acrylic on linen
65 3/4 x 59 3/4 inches
(167 x 152 cm)
(BMu 4)

3 E 89th St New York



Betty Muffler and
Marinka Burton
Ngangkari Ngura
(*Healing Country*), 2023

Acrylic on linen
78 x 120 inches
(198 x 305 cm)
(BMMB 1)

Betty Muffler and Maringka Burton

Senior Pitjantjatjara artist Betty Muffler is proficient in drawing, printmaking, and *tjanpi* weaving, though she is best known for her painting through Iwantja Arts. Over the past decade as a painter, Muffler has expertly refined her technique with acrylics. Many of her paintings are titled *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)*, which speaks to her work as a *ngangkari*. Widespread throughout the Central and Western Deserts, *ngangkari* are traditional Aboriginal healers or doctors who use their hands to heal. This practice was handed down to Muffler on her father's side; she spent years learning this practice from her aunts. Central to her responsibilities as a *ngangkari* is supporting the Anangu community, restoring its health, respecting kin, and looking after Country.

In her *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)* series, Muffler uses white paint on large canvases with a black background. She paints a bird's-eye view of her Country's important topographical features, including her birthplace east of Indulkana, animal tracks, local flora, waterholes, and *ngangkari* healing hands. Muffler also traces the ancestral pathways of the emu in her paintings. Each of these elements is represented by a different symbol, which the viewer must locate and consider. Water is another significant element in many of her works, reflecting the role of *ngangkari* in bringing rain to the dry desert. The plentiful lines in her works, reminiscent of flowing water, generate waves across the canvas, while the use of precise white patterns creates optical illusions. The varying scales of the symbols work together to give a kinetic impression of the landscape being depicted.

While extremely effective on a small scale, Muffler's unique compositions and semblance of motion are even more impressive en masse. The suite of works exhibited in *Desert + Coast* not only displays Muffler's expertise, but also her assertion of sovereignty on unceded Aboriginal land, especially in light of atrocities that have degraded her Country, like the atomic testing at Maralinga and Emu Field in the 1950s and 60s. These elements emanate from her collaborative works as well, specifically those painted with her niece Maringka Burton, a collaboration the two began in 2020.

Muffler and Burton's collaborative, large-scale *Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country)* painting is very similar in iconography and design to Muffler's black-and-white works, but incorporates purple acrylic to reference the twilight-lit hills of the desert. Each artist paints her view of Country on different parts of the canvas, and sinuous lines across the work serve as connective tissue between the symbols. Each painting in the collaborative series is completed over multiple sessions; each involves intricate discussions about composition and execution. The artists note that they often sing to their work as they paint—ceremonial songs of great importance known only to Elders in their community. This element only adds more joy to their practice, which is centered on kinship and the unique connection between aunt and niece.

PINTUPI



Mantua Nangala
Yukultji Napangati

(born c. 1959)

(born c. 1971)



Mantua Nangala
Untitled, 2018

Acrylic on linen
72 x 60 ¼ x 1½ inches
(182.9 x 153 x 3.8 cm)
(MNa 1)

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Yukultji Napangati
Untitled, 2022

Acrylic on linen
71 ¾ x 95 ¼ x 1 ¼ inches
(182.2 x 241.9 x 3.2 cm)
(YN 54)

3 E 89th St New York

S94

Mantua Nangala and Yukultji Napangati

Pintupi woman Mantua Nangala comes from a family of successful Papunya Tula artists. Nangala began to paint for Papunya Tula in 1998 and recalls, “I watched my father (Anatjari Tjampitjinpa) and my husband (Yumpululu Tjungurrayi) painting in the early days and learnt about canvas and paint, and then decided that I wanted to make canvas as well.”¹ Many of her paintings depict the journey of the Kanaputa women who traveled from the west through Mukula, Marrapinti, and Yunala—sacred places of ceremony and gathering for Pintupi women. In many of her works, Nangala employs a “traditional” color palette of earth tones, typical of Papunya Tula men’s paintings from the 1970s to 1990s.

Nangala’s paintings are characterized by rich strings of fine dots, the configurations of which evoke a sense of movement across the canvas. The sinuous collection of dots most accurately represents the sand dunes that occupy much of Pintupi Country. Though Nangala’s works may appear simple in composition, they are a complex continuation of Papunya Tula artistry, telling a layered story about the history of her people and Country. While her works all differ slightly in tone, Nangala often restricts her acrylics to five or so colors per painting, allowing each work to generate an atmospheric depiction of her homelands. In an interview with Kalkadoon and Eastern Arrernte curator Hetti Perkins, Nangala explained, “I like to make my paintings slowly, every dot slowly and carefully”²—an attention to detail that is part of what makes Nangala such a respected senior artist.

Another Pintupi artist who entralls viewers both in Australia and abroad is Yukultji Napangati. Napangati lived a nomadic lifestyle with her kin, having no knowledge of or contact with Western civilization, until her family, referred to as the Pintupi Nine, arrived in Kiwirrkurra in 1984. After watching her male relatives work with Papunya Tula, Napangati began to develop her own practice in the 1990s. Like Nangala, she paints with acrylic on canvas, depicting important ceremonial places for Pintupi women, including the rock hole site of Marrapinti, west of the Pollock Hills in Western Australia. Napangati highlights her connection to Pintupi Country in all of her works, emphasizing the positive impact growing up away from settler structures had on her.

Many of Napangati’s paintings, especially her early works, use red, yellow, black, and white acrylics that best capture the coloring of the Western Desert. This minimal palette allows viewers to understand the richness of the landscapes being depicted. In recent years, the artist has experimented with blue and monochromatic tones, offering a new, abstract way of considering Pintupi Country. All of Napangati’s canvases are lined with twisting trails of dots; similarly to Nangala’s painting, her careful execution of undulating lines generates movement across the canvas, reflecting the varying topography of her homelands. Some lines are composed of tight formations while others are looser strokes, giving the piece a sense of depth. Napangati is particularly well known for her addition of tight oscillating shapes in some of her works, which give a sense of dynamism to her practice. By interrupting the undulating lines, these structures generate a new pulse in her paintings.

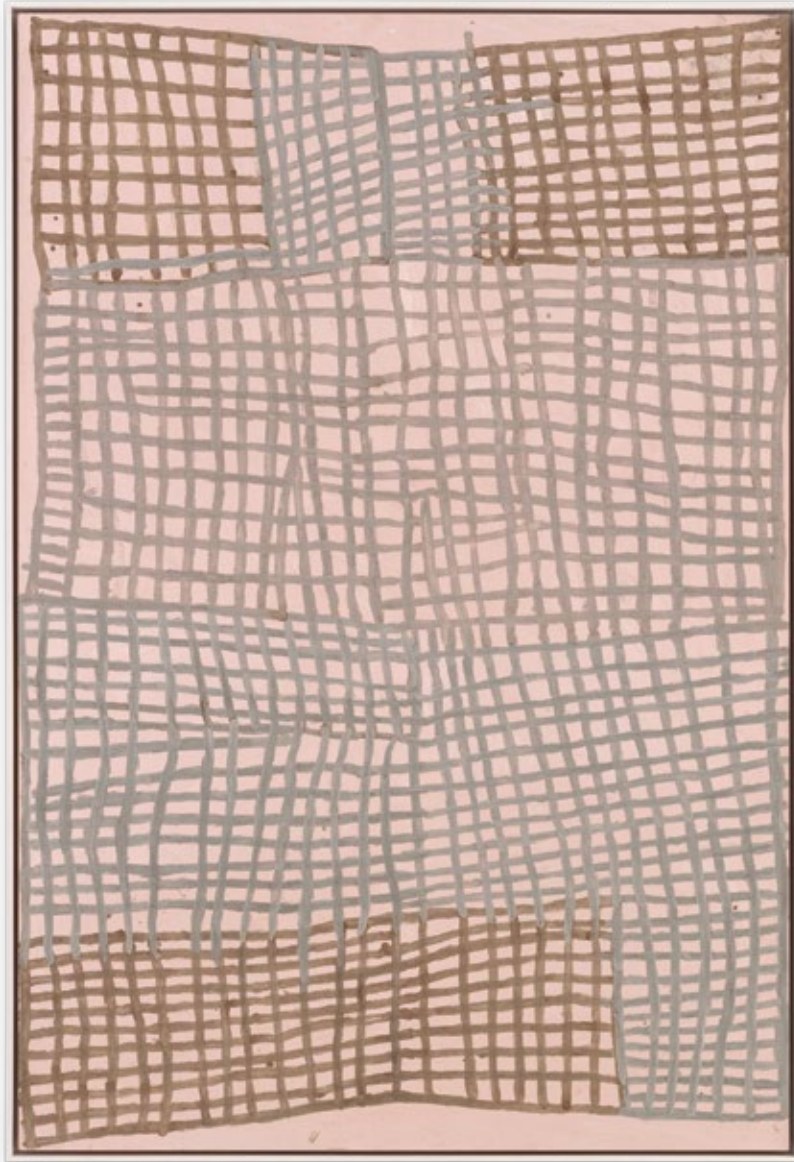
Both Nangala’s and Napangati’s paintings capture what W.E.H. Stanner referred to as “everywhen.”³ By this, the renowned anthropologist meant that Indigenous connections to Country and creation stories known as the Dreaming⁴ cannot be fixed at one point in time, for Aboriginal notions of temporarily are not synonymous with those in the Western world. The ancestral women, locations, and stories captured by Nangala and Napangati (as well as the five other artists in the exhibition) are always relevant and exist at every point in time. Their paintings encapsulate this immortality—the importance of stories that exist *everywhen*. This speaks to the importance of connection to Country in the Western Desert, as the Pintupi and Pitjantjatjara artists in *Desert + Coast* all remain strong in their links to community and culture.

YOLŪ



Nongirrŋa Marawili
Dhambit Munungurr

(born c. 1939 - d. 2023)
(b. 1968)



Nongjirra Marawili
Wandawuy, 2022

Earth pigments on board
70 7/8 x 48 inches
(180 x 122 cm)
(NoM 11)

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Baratjala, 2022

Earth pigments and
recycled print toner on board
75 7/8 x 48 inches
(192 x 122 cm)
(NoM 19)

3 E 89th St New York

S94



Dhambit Ruypu
Munungurr
Wärrkarr, 2022

Acrylic on bark
90 x 36 inches
(230 x 91.5 cm)
(DRM 1)

3 E 89th St New York



Wärrkarr, 2023

Acrylic on bark
86 7/8 x 35 3/4 inches
(219 x 90 cm)
(DRM 3)

S94



Wärrkarr, 2023

Acrylic on bark
87 x 39 1/2 inches
(221 x 100 cm)
(DRM 2)

3 E 89th St New York

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Nongirrŋa Marawili and Dhambit Ruypu Munungurr

As with art in the Western Desert, contemporary practices in Arnhem Land emerged over the course of the twentieth century, as missionaries and anthropologists commissioned Yolŋu, starting in Yirrkala, to produce art. Many were commissioned to paint images with ochre on stringybark, pieces of thin wood cut from trees during the wet season. The rough outer layers of fraying bark are removed, leaving a thin inner layer to be flattened and dried. This formed the base for thousands of paintings in the 1900s, as the first generation of male artists produced works picturing anthropomorphic forms, flora and fauna, forest, coastline, and more. Each bark painting featured the artist's distinct *miny'tji* (clan design), a crosshatched pattern that varies between Dhuwa and Yirritja moieties.

Though the art of Arnhem Land differs from art from central Australia, they share the same quality of merging the natural and spiritual worlds. The artists have not only a physical connection to the Country being painted, but ties to a strong spiritual element beyond the surface that signifies a connection to kin who have passed away and knowledge of creation stories told for thousands of years. One of the most expressive contemporary artists to convey this cultural complexity is the late Nongirrŋa Marawili, who passed away in late 2023. Nongirrŋa Marawili's family has authorized the use of her name in written form but request that it not be spoken aloud in the presence of people from Arnhem Land or in the Miwatj region. Her spirit has a long journey to go on, to return to her origin point. Calling her name aloud could distract and delay her spirit's return in a new form.

Though she began experimenting with paint and printmaking in the 1980s, Marawili did not paint on stringybark—and later paper, board, aluminium, and hollow burial poles made of logs called *larrakitj*—until the 2000s. Marawili's work differs from that of her male peers, as there is much more negative space filled with color. Also unlike other Yolŋu works, she did not feature dense crosshatching in all of her paintings. Rather, Marawili's works are best described as configurations of fine lines and dots over color-blocked backgrounds. In addition to the use of natural ochres, Marawili integrated recycled magenta printer toner. The result is a distinctly unique oeuvre, though no work is the same. Some paintings feature large amounts of magenta, while others are more reserved; some include dark purples and yellows; some are completely monochromatic. Marawili also experimented with scale, producing a combination of small and oversized stringybark paintings.

While Marawili's works differ in composition, scale, and palette, there is a recurring iconography. Many of the artist's paintings feature water—places where the sea crashes onto the shore and rocks—while others picture the intense lightning prevalent in the wet season. The intersections between land, sea, and sky all come to the foreground in her practice. This connects to the notion of *everywhen*, for Marawili's paintings represent places and occurrences in nature that have existed from time immemorial, just as Yolŋu people have and continue to engage with their Country.

Like Marawili, Dhambit Munungurr is an accomplished painter from Arnhem Land who learned from her two successful artist parents Mutitjpu Munungurr and Gulumbu Yunupinju. After an accident in 2005, Munungurr had to learn to paint with her non-dominant left hand. Subsequently, she gained cultural permission to use acrylic paint rather than ochres, which require laborious preparation. She ultimately refined her skills and introduced a distinct palette of acrylic cobalt blues in her paintings on stringybark and *larrakitj*. By taking a long leap from the natural pigments used by other Yolŋu artists, Munungurr challenged preconceptions about what art from Arnhem Land looks like.

Like all artists in this exhibition, Munungurr's practice is a form of self-expression. Not only does she paint in her unique style, she also captures traditions passed down to her by her kin and knowledge that has existed for thousands of years. This is evident in her *Wärrkar* paintings. In contrast to her overtly political and satirical works, these paintings depict the *wärrkar* onion lily, a flower that grows around lagoons at the beginning of the wet season. The flowers' bloom signals the beginning of *maranydjalk* (stingray) hunting season. In Arnhem Land, life is heavily predicated on the seasons, which enable different hunting and collecting practices to occur. By painting the *wärrkar*, Munungurr demonstrates her knowledge of the seasons and Yolŋu ways of knowing. She also speaks to the continuity of practice over time, despite colonial attempts to eradicate Indigenous culture in Australia. Unlike the iconography employed by Muffler, Burton, Nangala, Napangati, and Marawili, Munungurr's flora paintings are more literal illustrations, though they still carry important cultural knowledge beneath the surface.



KAIADILT



Mirdidingkingathi
Jumarnda Sally Gabori

(born c. 1924 - d. 2015)



Mirdidingkingathi
Juwarnda Sally Gabori
Dibirdibi Country, 2011

Synthetic polymer paint on linen
77 ⁶¹/₆₄ x 179 ⁵⁷/₆₄ inches
(198 x 455 cm)
(SGa 3)

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3 E 89th St New York

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Mirdidingkingathi Juarnda Sally Gabori

Arguably one of the most innovative thinkers in recent contemporary painting, Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori is the epitome of perseverance and female excellence. Though her career only spanned a decade, Gabori attained immediate global acclaim and remains lauded by Australian and international art lovers. She grew up on Bentinck Island with her Kaiadilt kin, but was displaced from her Country and relocated to Mornington Island, where she lived from 1948 until her death in 2015. Her Kaiadilt name translates to “dolphin born at Mirdidingki,” part of her Country on the south of Bentinck Island. The name Sally was bestowed during her time on Mornington Island, as Kaiadilt people were pressured to adopt Western names; Gabori is most likely a variation of her husband’s birthplace name, Kabararrjingathi.

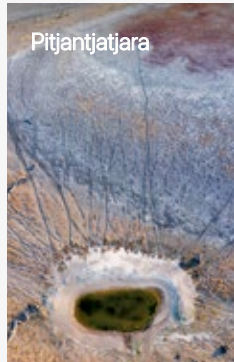
Gabori did not begin to paint until 2005, when at the age of 81 she attended a workshop for Lardil men at the Mornington Island Arts and Crafts Centre. Until this point in time, no Kaiadilt people had painted, nor did they have ingrained iconographic traditions as seen in other parts of Australia. With no rock art, sand drawings, or body painting to reference, Gabori began experimenting with acrylics on canvas. Using a combination of bright colors, Gabori started on a small scale before quickly transitioning to canvases larger than her painting table. Gabori used broad brushstrokes to generate dense, layered blocks of color. She would often mix wet paint on the canvas and place a watered-down milky pigment on top of her works, producing abstract compositions unprecedented within Aboriginal art. Lacking circles, dots, crosshatching, or distinct iconography, Gabori’s paintings were completely innovative from the first day she picked up a paintbrush. This was revolutionary within the art world; many believed they were already familiar with all possible types of Indigenous art from Australia.

Gabori had been displaced from her Country for almost sixty years by the time she started painting, yet her memory of home remained vivid. In her early practice, the artist referenced the role of women in her community, who would catch fish using woven nets. Thereafter, Gabori began to paint special places on her Country, including Nyinyilki, home to a freshwater lagoon and later the base for an outstation. Gabori painted (albeit abstractly) this lagoon, the surrounding bush, fish traps, cliffs, and sandbar. Many of Gabori’s other works reference her husband’s Dibirdibi Country and the Rock Cod ancestor story. Gabori paints this being’s journey along the Bentinck Island coastline, as it created channels between nearby islands.

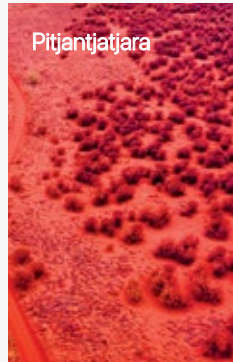
Gabori’s paintings are enigmatic, unable to be understood in their entirety at first glance. While her works comprise layers of paint, there are also cultural layers that determine our understanding of her art. This can be said of the Yolŋu, Pitjantjatjara, and Pintupi artists as well. When viewing the paintings in this exhibition, audiences must go beyond the surface. Knowledge of the subject matter or painting method is not enough; rather, an appreciation of iconography, regional history, the destruction of Aboriginal Country, displacement experienced by the artists, and their specific cultural responsibilities is required.

The onus is on viewers to actively engage with the paintings in *Desert + Coast*. A conscious effort to educate oneself and understand not only the rich history of Aboriginal art, but the innovation of these seven senior female artists, is required. Indigenous art in Australia has traversed ancient traditions to be cemented as a strong contemporary practice. The paintings in this exhibition capture memories of Country, culture, and kin dear to each woman. The result is a portfolio of dynamic genius, centering female autonomy, Aboriginal sovereignty, artistry, culture, Country, and community. The artists chose to share these works with outsiders—a cultural practice of knowledge sharing that must be respected and reciprocated.

Desert



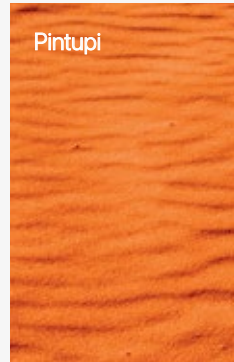
Pitjantjatjara



Pitjantjatjara



Pintupi



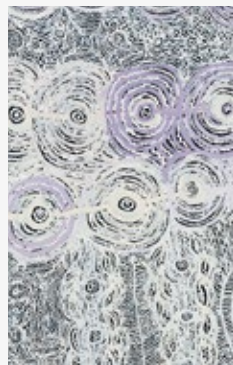
Pintupi



Betty
Muffler

—
*Ngangkari Ngura
(Healing Country)*, 2023

Acrylic on linen
59 ½ x 48 inches
(152 x 122 cm)
(BMu 5)



Betty Muffler and
Marinka Burton

—
*Ngangkari Ngura
(Healing Country)*, 2023

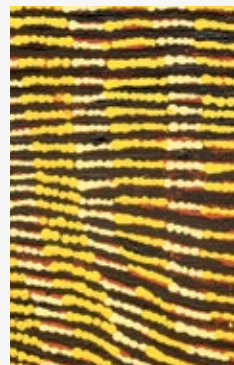
Acrylic on linen
78 x 120 inches
(198 x 305 cm)
(BMMB 1)



Mantua
Nangala

—
Untitled,
2018

Acrylic on linen
72 x 60 ¼ x 1 ½ inches
(182.9 x 153 x 3.8 cm)
(MNa 1)



Yukultji
Napangati

—
Untitled,
2018

Framed Dimensions:
73 ¾ x 97 ¼ x 2 ¼ inches
(187.3 x 247 x 5.7 cm)
Image Dimensions:
71 ⅞ x 95 ½ inches
(182.6 x 242.6 cm)
(YN 22)

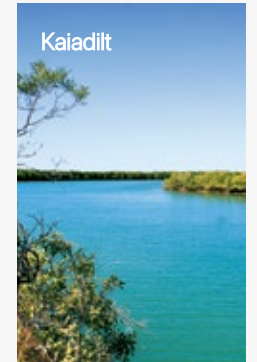
Coast



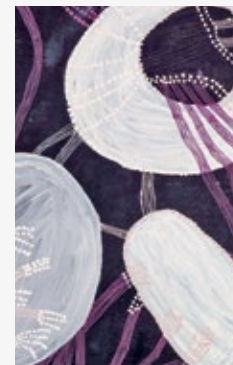
Yolŋu



Yolŋu



Kaiadilt



Nongirrŋa
Marawili

—
Baratjala,
2022

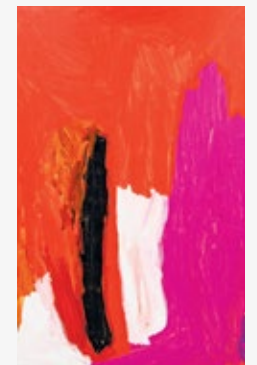
Earth pigments and
recycled print toner
on board
48 x 48 inches
(122 x 122 cm)
(NoM 15)



Dhambit Ruypu
Munungurr

—
Wärrkarr,
2023

Acrylic on bark
87 x 39 ½ inches
(221 x 100 cm)
(DRM 2)



Mirdidingkingathi
Juwarnda Sally Gabori

—
Dibiridibi Country,
2009

Synthetic polymer
paint on linen
59 ½ x 39 ¾ inches
(151 x 101 cm)
(SGa 9)

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- ¹ "Mantua Nangala: Artist Statement," National Gallery of Australia, <https://nga.gov.au/publications/ceremony/mantua-nangala>.
- ² Mantua Nangala, interview by Hetti Perkins, *National Gallery of Australia Q&A*, March 1, 2022, <https://nga.gov.au/stories-ideas/mantua-nangala/>.
- ³ W.E.H. Stanner, *The Dreaming & Other Essays* (Wurundjeri Country: Black Inc., 2011).
- ⁴ Though Stanner was quick to use "Dreaming" when discussing *everywhen*, this term is considered problematic by some, as it is a Western turn of phrase conceived to encapsulate a vast, complex, and ever-changing part of Indigenous culture. The word Dreaming is also often applied to the entirety of Indigenous Australia as a collective, when in actuality the hundreds of language groups that exist today are extremely diverse and have their own understandings of the creation of their Country, the role of ancestors, and key knowledges preserved for thousands of years.

Essay by: Shanyssa McConville

Shanyssa McConville is a proud Eastern Arrernte woman from Mparntwe (Alice Springs) living in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. She works as an associate curator at the University of Melbourne in the Indigenous Collections team. She is currently working on the major exhibition *65,000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art* with Professor Marcia Langton AO and Senior Curator Judith Ryan AM, which will open at the Ian Potter Museum of Art. In addition to her curatorial roles, Shanyssa teaches into the Indigenous Studies programs at the University of Melbourne and Deakin University.

Artists image credits (in order of appearance):

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My Country, 2008

Synthetic polymer paint on linen
59 ½ x 39 ¾ inches
(151 x 101 cm)
(SGa 5)

All works by: Betty Muffler, Maringka Burton, Mantua Nangala, Yukultji Napangati, Nongirrma Marawili, Dhambit Munungurr, and Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori.

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