



**Ningura Naparrula**

(Indigenous Australian, ca. 1938 - 2013)

## Biography

Ningura Naparrula was born around 1938 in Watulka, south of Kiwirikurra, Northern Territory. Ningura Naparrula is the widow of the famous Papunya artist Yala Yala Gibbs. Ningura was represented at the ARCO Art Fair 2002 in Spain and in the same year won the prestigious Alice Prize. Ningura Naparrula began painting in the 90s and with Naata Nungurrayi is one of the founders of the 'Pintupi Painting Women' movement from Kintore. Her most impressive work is large in size and often executed in two colors (usually black and white or red and white). Her work stands out for its sharp patterns in which white dots form a delicate linear web where the dark background shines through. This gives the illusion that the dark surface forms the upper layer of paint, which gives her paintings a spectacular perspective. She paints with a refinement and detail that is exceptional for Aboriginal Art. Ningura is also a member of the Papunya Tula Artists collective. Since motifs from her work were included in the architecture of the 2006 opening of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris, her work has become popular worldwide.

Ningura Naparrula was born around 1938 in Watulka south of Kiwirikurra, Northern Territory. Ningura Naparrula was a young woman in her mid-twenties when she took her first journey out of the Gibson Desert in 1962 to Papunya with the Northern Territory Welfare Branch patrol. After their son received medical treatment at Papunya, Naparrula and her husband Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi were transported by another patrol back to their own country, close to the present day site of Kiwirrkura. The following year, Naparrula and Tjungurrayi walked back to Papunya with their whole family group as part of a general migration of Pintupi people from their country.

Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi became one of the founders of Papunya Tula Artists in the early 1970s, and one of the exponents of the classic Tingari painting style that dominated Pintupi men's painting until the early 1990s. In the 1980s, the family moved back to the newly established Pintupi township of Walungurru (Kintore), then to Muntarti outstation in Western Australia, before returning to Walungurru. Here, Napurrula and Tjungurrayi's other two wives began assisting Tjungurrayi in infilling the backgrounds of his canvases with the meticulous, precisely placed dots that characterised the Tingari style.

Napurrula first painted in her own right in 1995, in the second year of the Haasts Bluff/Kintore women's painting project. Following Tjungurrayi's death in 1998, her painting activity increased dramatically. Her bold, intricate linework and dense monochrome infilling – as seen in Untitled (Wirrulnga), 2000 – are reminiscent of Tjungurrayi's earliest works. Wirrulnga is an important women's rockhole site east of Kiwirrkura. Napurrula's work is strongly charged with the seriousness of women's business, echoed in the distinctive paintings of fellow Papunya Tula Artists, Makinti Napanangka and Inyuwa Nampitjinpa. Napurrula and Tjungurrayi's sons, Morris Gibson Tjapaltjarri (Mawitji) and Adam Gibbs Tjapaltjarri, now carry on their mother's and father's work in their own paintings.

Her most impressive work is large in size and often done in two colors (usually black and white or red and white). Her work stands out for its sharply executed patterns in which white dots form up a delicate linear game where the dark background shines through. This gives the illusion that the dark surface forms the upper layer of paint, which gives her paintings a spectacular perspective. She paints with refinement and detail that is exceptional for Aboriginal Art and her finest work shows an unprecedented determination. Niagara is also a member of the Papunya Tula Artist collective. Since motifs from her work were included in the architecture of the in 2006 opened Musée de Quai Branly in Paris, her work is very popular worldwide. We are very lucky to have some of her work complementing our collection. Niagara exhibits continuously in numerous renowned galleries across Australia and held a number of successful solo exhibitions.

#### Selected Collections

Hank Ebes Collection, Melbourne, Australia  
Artbank, Sydney, Australia  
Luciano Benetton Collection, Venice, Italy  
Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Australia  
Art Gallery of New South Wales (NSW), Sydney, Australia  
Griffith University Art Collection, Brisbane, Australia  
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia  
The Henderson Family Collection, Sydney, Australia  
The Luczo Family Collection, USA  
Markus Spazzapan and Suzan Cox Collection, Darwin, Australia  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia  
Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France  
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation Collection, Australia  
Australian Tourism collection, Adelaide, Australia  
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia  
Pizzi Collection, Melbourne, Australia  
Museum de Lyon, Lyon, France  
National Museum of Australia, Canberra, Australia  
HOOD Museum of Art, Hanover, USA  
Harold Mitchell Foundation, Australia  
Queensland National Art Gallery, South Brisbane, Australia  
National Gallery of Victoria, Southbank, Australia  
Homes a Court Collection, West Perth, Australia  
Kelton Foundation, California, USA  
The Palace of Japan, Tokyo, Japan  
The Harold Mitchell Foundation and the Australia Council, Australia  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation Collection, Australia

#### Awards

2006 - Australia's top 50 most collectible artists

2002 - Alice Springs Art Award

2001 - National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award

### Selected Exhibitions

2018

*Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan & Levi collection*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, USA

2017 - 2018

Work by Ningura Napurrula from the collection of Musée de Quai Branly is on view in the Louvre, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2015

*Signs and Traces. Contemporary Aboriginal Exhibitions*, Zamek Culture Centre, Poznan, Poland

2012

*Unique Perspectives, Papunya Tula Artists and the Alice Springs Community*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, AU

2011

*Papunya Tula Women's Art*, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, AU

2010

*Nyakula Kanyini Piintapalyalpayi Kamu Walytja Tjanamapa Lurrtju - Caring for Artists and their Families*, Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, AU  
*Walkinkarralakutu - Journeys to Lake Mackay*, Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, AU  
*Emerging Elders*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, AU

2009

*Painting the Country*, Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, AU  
*Tjukurrpa Palurukutu, Kutjupawana Palyantjanya - Same Stories - A New Way*, Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, AU  
*Nganampatju Kanpatja Winjki, Ngnampatju Yara Winkii - All Our Paintings, All Our Stories*, Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, AU

2008

*Ngurra Yurra Kulintjaku - Always Remembering Country*, Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, AU  
*The Other Thing - A Survey Show*, Charles Darwin University Art Collection, AU  
*Marrkangku Yara Palyantjaku Ngurrangka - Making Strong Paintings at Home*, Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, AU

2007

*TogArt Contemporary Art Award*, Parliament House, Canberra, AU  
*Recent Paintings 2007*, Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, AU  
*Wonderful World*, Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide, AU  
*Big Paintings from Papunya Tula Artists*, Utopia Art Sydney, AU  
The Mollie Gowing Acquisition Fund, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, AU

2006

*Landmarks*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU  
*Dreaming their Way*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C., USA  
*Papunya Tula Artists across the board*, Utopia Arts Sydney, AU  
Ningura Napurrula selected for new design on the first floor ceilings of the museum, Musée du quai Branly, Paris, France

2005

*Translation*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France  
*The Desert Mob Art Show*, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, AU

2004

*Mythology and Reality*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, AU

2003

*Australian Contemporary Aboriginal Art*, Toskansky Place, Prague, Czech Republic

2001

*Aborigena*, Palazzo Bricherasio, Turin, Italy  
*Beyond Wings*, Flinders University Art Museum, Flinders, AU

2000

*Papunya Tula - Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, AU

1999

*The Desert Mob Art Show*, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, AU

1996

Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, AU

### Selected Art Fairs

EXPO Chicago, Chicago, USA  
Zona Maco, Mexico City, Mexico