





Marrapinti, 2011
acrylic on linen, 46 x 38 cm

Naata NUNGURRAYI

6pm Friday 25 November 2011

Papunya Tula Artists Gallery, 63 Todd Mall Alice Springs Australia

Exhibition opened by RG Kimber, Art Coordinator of Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd 1976-78

‘When asked to recall her childhood, Naata spoke in whispers of the memory of waking at sunrise to the sound of her fathers voice, singing the songs of the lake near where they camped, Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay).’¹

This exhibition of paintings by the senior Pintupi elder, Naata Nungurrayi is the climax of a sustained, slow-burn career that has come to define a generation of painters from the Papunya Tula collective of artists. Nungurrayi was amongst a

small group of women from Kintore and Kiwirrkura who began painting in the mid-1990s and in doing so recast a painting movement which, twenty five years earlier, changed the way Australians’ view their continent. The small number of paintings she has produced over the past fifteen years epitomise the excitement and verve of Pintupi women’s painting and stand as archetypal examples of the way women from the desert see their ancestral lands.

Initially Naata was a reticent member of the women’s painting group, often sitting quietly beside her inseparable late sister Ngangi (Nancy). Naata worked slowly on small compositions of lines and roundels that loosely reflected the classic Tingari paintings made famous by the male painters of Papunya Tula. As Naata’s confidence grew, so too did her presence among the painters. She developed a unique iconography, teeming with giant ‘U’ shapes, mollusc-like forms depicted rocky outcrops and deep-etched lines representing the surrounding sandhills which bulge like scars on an arm or cleavage. The complex topographies of Marrapinti, Unkunya and Irrututu are often mapped by armlets, grids and roundels, concealed in dense layers of colour. Painted ancestral bodies move through this landscape collecting kampurarrpa, lighting fires and making camp to prepare for ceremony. Time and age has seen Naata emerge as an instinctive painter whose command of line, colour and form is immediate and breathtaking. Artist and art are

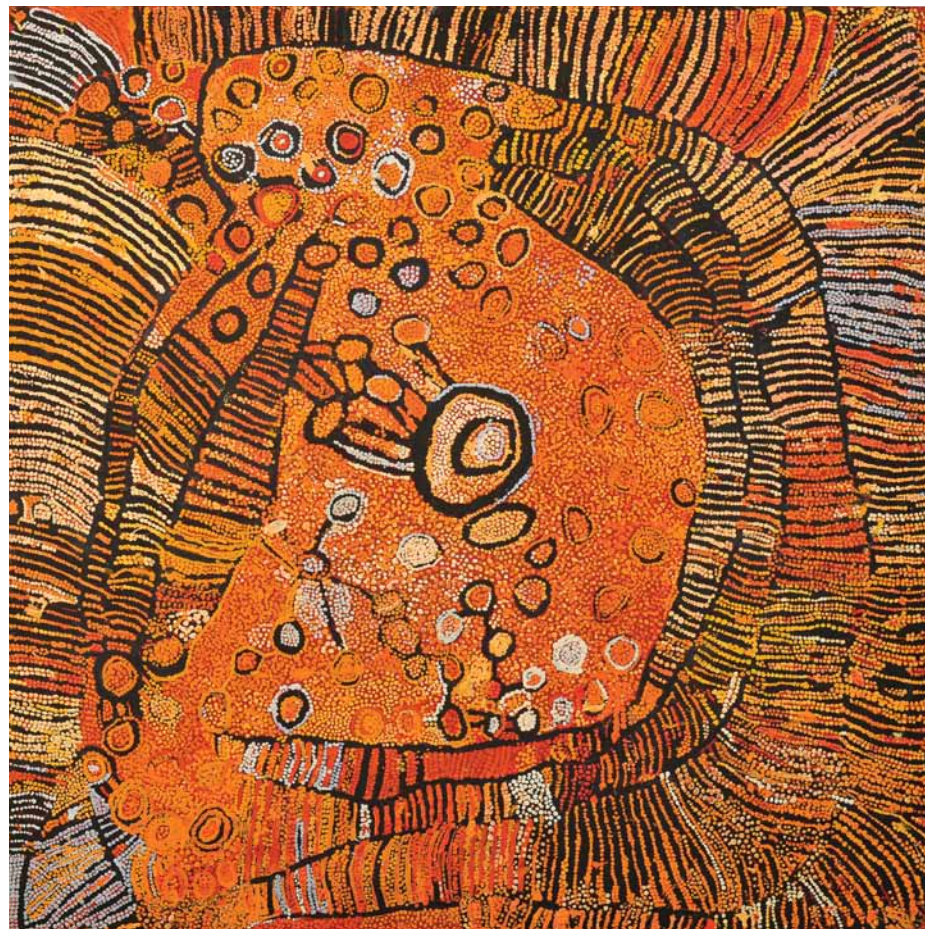
¹ In conversation with Sarita Quinlivan, Walungurru, September 2007.

rarely so inextricably linked, each a precious balance of cultural authority, artistic spontaneity, conviction and whim.

These recent paintings, characterised by sensitivity and gesture, bring us closer to the artists remembrance of country. Without paint and brush these memories would have remained as songs or oral histories, spoken in hushed tones, re-enacted in dance, painted on skin and rock. This thought should remind us that the bi-cultural exchange that this art movement has provoked is a gift, one which has come into splendid focus in this timely exhibition.

Luke Scholes 2011

Incorporating excerpts from Luke Scholes' essay in *Beyond Sacred: Recent Paintings from Australia's Remote Aboriginal Communities*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, Victoria, 2008.

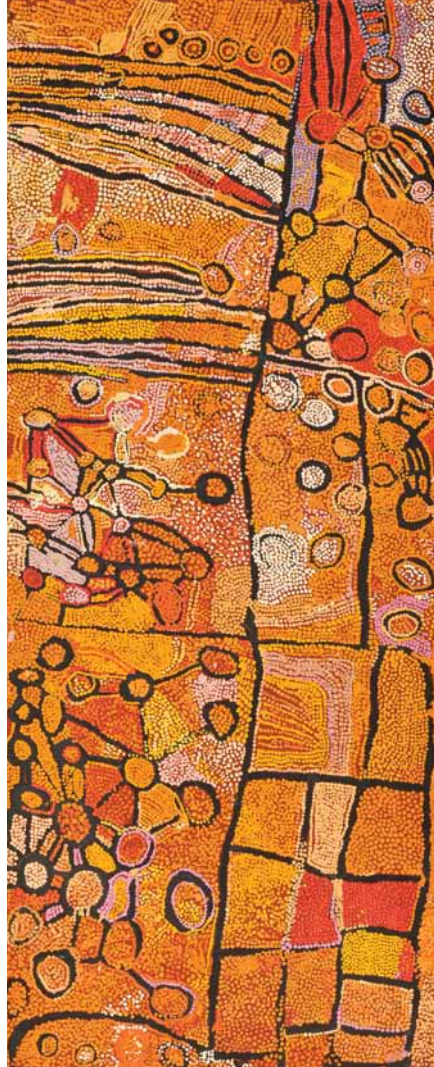


Irrututu, 2010

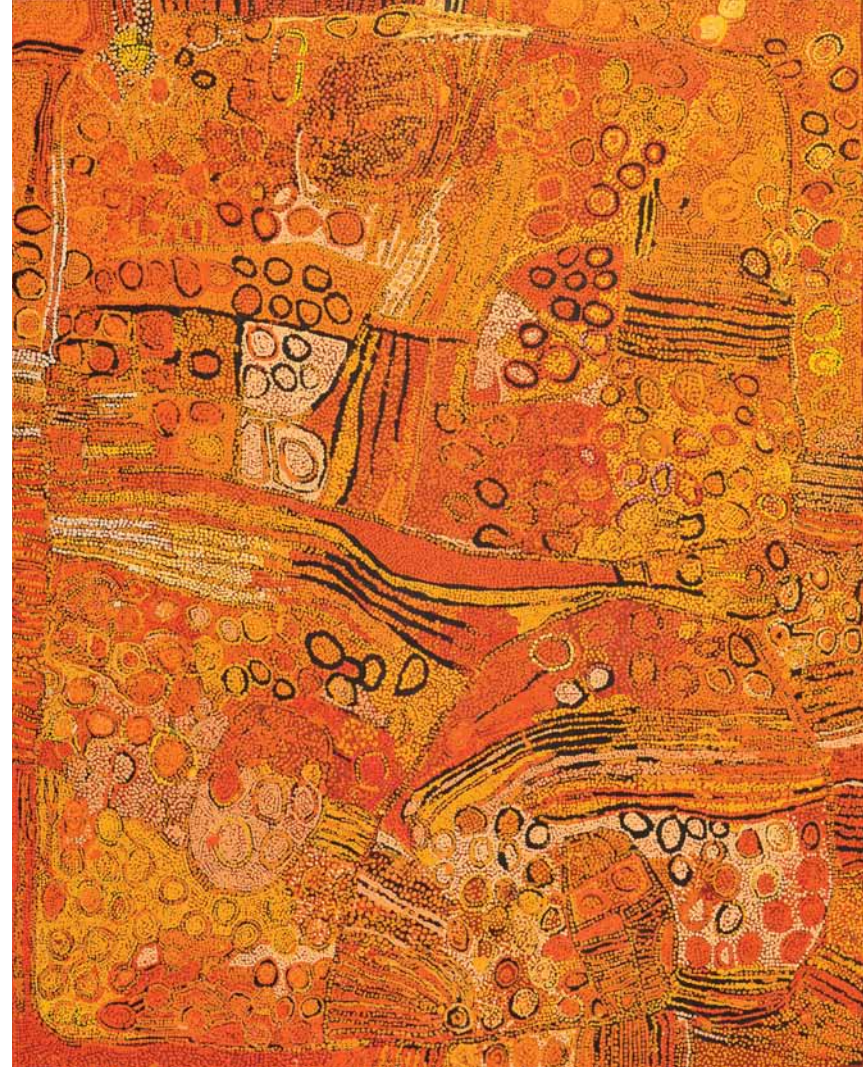
acrylic on linen, 122 x 122 cm



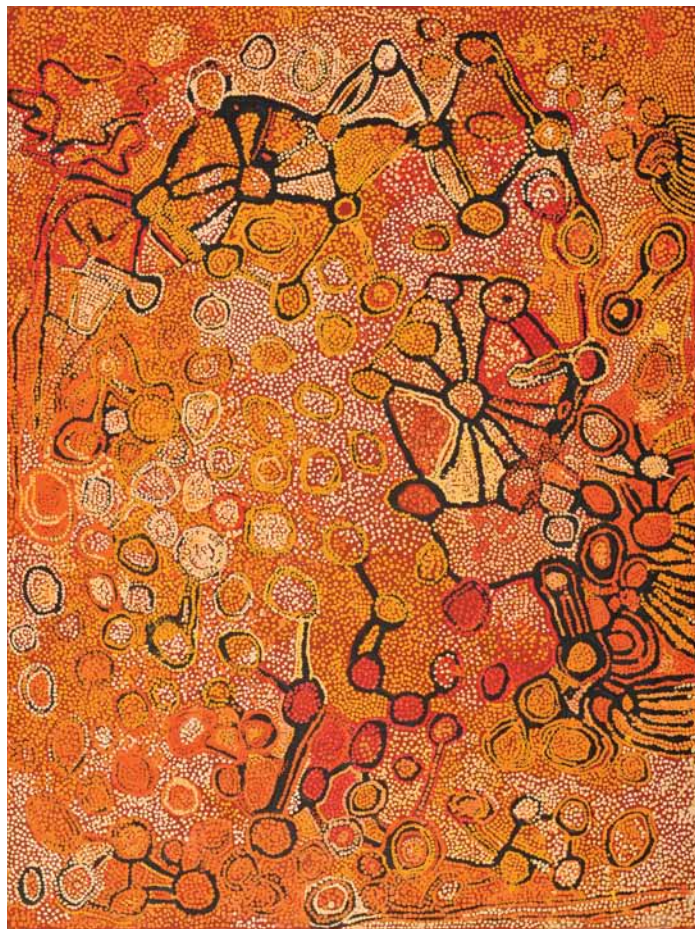
Marrapinti, 2011
acrylic on linen, 153 x 183 cm



Unkunya, 2010
acrylic on linen, 153 x 61 cm



Piti Kutjarra, 2010
acrylic on linen, 153 x 122 cm



Kalututjarra, 2010
acrylic on linen, 122 x 91 cm



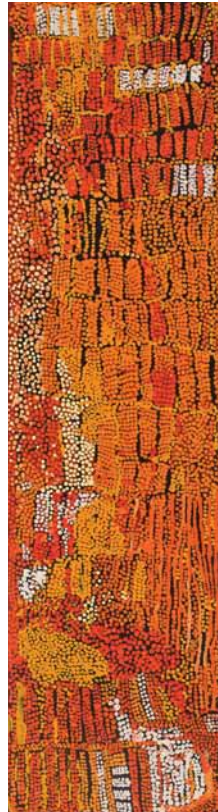
Irrututu, 2011
acrylic on linen, 91 x 46 cm



Marrapinti, 2011
acrylic on linen, 91 x 46 cm



Marrapinti, 2009
acrylic on linen, 87 x 28 cm



Piti Kutjarra, 2011
acrylic on linen, 107 x 28 cm



Ngaminya, 2011
acrylic on linen, 46 x 38 cm



Likil, 2010
acrylic on linen, 46 x 38 cm

