

# **PAINTING THE COUNTRY**

Tracking the kingfisher songline from the western desert to Uluru with a group of internationally acclaimed artists and custodians from Balgo Hills



1 Hour HDTV Documentary

**Producers**  
**Andrew Ogilvie**  
**Robin Eastwood**

**Writer / Director**  
**Sally Ingleton**

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**c/- 33 Canning Highway**  
**East Fremantle WA 6158**  
**Tel: (08) 9339 1133**  
**Fax: (08) 9339 1183**

# Artists' Biographies

The intention is to take 5 male and 5 female artists on the trip in order that sites and country relating to both men and women can be painted and recorded. The final details of whom will go is under discussion but the following will definitely be part of the trip because of their custodial links to that country and dreaming.

They are all highly regarded artists.

## BAI BAI NAPANGNARTI

**Born:** 1. 7.1939  
**Location:** Tjawa Tjawa (Pt Moody)  
**Skin:** Napangarti  
**Language:** Kukatja and Ngarti



### SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

#### Medium and Themes

*Acrylic paint on canvas and linen*

Hair belt spinning story, echidna, crow, kangaroo, dingo, native cat and bush carrot

Waterholes and claypans

Snakes

#### Biography

*Bai Bai is a senior Law Woman of Balgo. Her country extends from Mangkayi in the Stansmore Ranges to just south of Yagga Yagga. Bai Bai has travelled extensively for cultural reasons. She spent her youth and early adult years travelling through her family's land learning traditional law and culture. She began to paint in 1986 in Balgo and since then has also introduced younger members of her family to painting. She has been involved in several publications including Yarrtji: Six women's stories from The Great Sandy Desert, 1997 Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, which was short listed for the NSW Premier's History Awards in 1998. Bai Bai is a long serving member of the Kimberley Land Council, and a strong practitioner of women's law and culture in Balgo.*

## Exhibitions

1999, *Miliynyin*, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle

1998, *15th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museum and

Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

1997, *New Painting by Balgo Women*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

1997, *Daughters of the Dreaming: Sisters Together Strong*, Art Gallery of Western

Australia, Perth

1995, *New Works By the Artists of Balgo Hills*, Coe-ee Aboriginal Art, Sydney

1994, *Aboriginal Desert Women's Law*, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria

1994, *Aboriginal Desert Women's Law*, A.R.T. Collins Place Gallery, Melbourne

1994, *Desert Spirit Paintings*, Channing Gallery, Santa Fe, USA

1993, *Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the Kimberley*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

1991, *Yapa: Peintres Aborigenes de Balgo et Lajamanu*, Baudon Lebon Gallery, Paris

1991, *Aboriginal Art and Spirituality*, High Court, Canberra

1990, *Recent Balgo Paintings*, Dreamtime Gallery, Perth, WA

1989, *Balgo Paintings*, Robert Steele Gallery, Adelaide, SA

1989, *Balgo Painting*, Dreamtime Gallery, Perth, WA

1989, *Recent Paintings from Balgo*, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, Victoria

1988, *Art from Balgo Hills*, Birukmarri Gallery, Fremantle, WA

1986, *Art From the Great Sandy Desert*, Art Gallery of WA, Perth

## Collections

Morven Estate

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Berndt Museum of Anthropology, University of Western Australia

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

The Holmes á Court Collection, Perth

Kluge-Ruhe Collection, USA

Kelton Collection, USA

Laverty Collection

National Gallery of Victoria

# LUCY YUKENBARRI

*Born* 1934  
*Location* Kuntawarra?  
*Skin* Napanangka  
*Language group* Kukatja

## SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

### Medium and Themes

*Chromacryl*  
*Student's acrylic on cotton duck*  
*Acrylic on one ply*  
*Acrylic on canvas and linen*  
*Goanna, bush turkey, bush fruit*  
*Camp sites, waterholes*  
*Tingarri*

### Biography

*Lucy is respected as a senior custodian with a vast knowledge of the waterholes in the Great Sandy Desert. She works diligently at her paintings, which are boldly covered in thick dabs of paint. Lucy concentrates on painting the soaks and rockholes of her country. She also paints numerous types of bush food including Kantilli (bush raisins) and purra (bush tomato). Lucy laughs as she describes herself as a "wild one" in her youth running away from ceremonial business into the bush. There is also the story of the long walk in from the desert to the mission where they would stop at wells along the track to pump for water. Once at the mission she helped make bread and later began painting. She has travelled extensively with her painting (Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Darwin, Kununurra) however prefers to stay in Balgo with her family.*

### Solo Exhibitions

*1999, Tjurrnu –Living Water, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne*

### Group Exhibitions

*1999, 16th National ATSI Art Awards, Museum Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*  
*1999, East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council, Kununurra*  
*1999, 30<sup>th</sup> Alice Price, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs*  
*1999, Mularrpa (True) Balgo, Framed the Darwin Gallery, Darwin*  
*1999, Miliynyin, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
*1999, Miliynyin, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle*  
*1998, Culture Store, Art Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands*  
*1998, Ngurrara – My own Country, Hogarth galleries, Sydney*

1998, *Art Gallery Baehr, Speyer, Germany*  
 1998, *Dreamings, Spazio Pitti Arte, Florence, Italy*  
 1998, *The Lavery Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney*  
 1998, *Dreamings, Vlaams-Europeesch Conferentiecentrum, Brussels, Belgium*  
 1998, *Hilton Hotel Art Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands*  
 1997, *Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs*  
 1997, *Big Balgos - Recent Paintings by Warlayirti Artists, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
 1997, *New Painting by Balgo Women, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne*  
 1997, *Dreamings, Arnhem, Netherlands*  
 1997, *Goteborgs Konstforening, Goteborg, Sweden*  
 1997, *Innenseite - Projektgruppe Stoffwechsel, Kassel & Gottingen, Germany*  
 1997, *Desert Country, Matso's, Broome*  
 1994, *Wirrimanu: Aboriginal Art from Balgo, Framed Gallery, Darwin, NT*  
 1994, *The Eleventh National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*  
 1994, *Power of the Land, Masterpieces of Aboriginal Art, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*  
 1993, *Images of Power, Aboriginal Art of the Kimberley, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*  
 1993, *Aboriginal Art Exhibition, Kung Gubunga, Oasis Gallery, Broadbeach, QLD*  
 1991, *Paintings by Senior Women from the Western Desert, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria*  
 1990, *Warlayirti Artists, Birukmarri Gallery, Fremantle, WA*  
 1989, *The Sixth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*

## **Collections**



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*Artbank, Sydney*

*Campbelltown City Art Gallery*  
*National Gallery of Australia, Canberra*  
*National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne*  
*The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth*  
*Lavery Collection*  
*Berndt Museum of Anthropology UWA*

## **Awards**

1999, *WARINGARRI ARTS AWARD, East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council,*

# HELICOPTER TJUNGARRAYI

*Born:* c1937  
*Location:* Ninmi  
*Skin:* Tjungarrayi  
*Language Group:* Kukatja

## SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

### **Medium and Themes**

*Chromacryl*  
*students acrylics on cotton duck*  
*acrylic paint on canvas*  
*acrylic on linen*  
*Pipar Country- his mother's country*  
*Ninmi country- his father's country*  
*Tingarri*  
*Soakwaters*

### **Biography**

Helicopter is senior lawman, healer and a respected painter alongside his wife Lucy Yukenbarri.. When Helicopter first started painting he used the name Joey Tjungarrayi. In the early 1990's he painted with his wife not seeking any acknowledgment. Since 1994 Helicopter has been painting on his own again in a distinctive linear style that emanates around the central feature of a soak water. Helicopter travelled widely during the mission days to pick up supplies (Broome, Alice Springs, Wyndham) There are many stories of the endless tasks performed on the Mission; drilling for water, cutting timber for fencing, fixing the windmill. More recently Helicopter has travelled with his painting to Darwin and Melbourne. He remains dedicated to painting his country and the country of his mother and father where he lived a nomadic life as a young boy.

### **Solo Exhibitions**

1999, Tjurrnu –Living Water, *Alcaston Gallery , Melbourne*

### **Group Exhibitions**

1999, *16th National ATSI Art Awards, Museum Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*  
1999, *East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council, Kununurra*  
1999, *Desert mob '99, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs*  
1999, *30<sup>th</sup> Alice Price, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs*

1999, Mularrpa (True) Balgo, *Framed the Darwin Gallery, Darwin*  
1999, Miliynyin, *Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
1999, Miliynyin, *Japingka Gallery, Fremantle*  
1998, Culture Store, *Art Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands*  
1998, Ngurrara – My own Country, *Hogarth galleries, Sydney*  
1998, Dreamings, *Spazio Pitti Arte, Florence, Italy*  
1998, Balgo Men, *Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne*  
1998, *Hilton Hotel Art Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands*  
1998, Dreamings, *Vlaams-Europeesch Conferentiecentrum, Brussels, Belgium*  
1997, *Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs*  
1997, New Paintings From Balgo Artists, *Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne*  
1997, Big Balgos - Recent Paintings by Warlayirti Artists, *Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
1997, Dreamings, *Arnhem, Netherlands*  
1997, *Innenseite - Projektgruppe Stoffwechsel, Kassel & Gottingen, Germany*  
1997, Desert Country, *Matso's, Broome*

### **Collections**

1997, *Gantner Myer Collection*  
*Laverty Collection*

### **Awards**

1999, *Special Commendations, East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council,*

# JOHN LEE TJAKAMARRA

*Born* 18/4 /1956  
*Location* Wirramanu  
*Skin* Tjakamarra  
*Languages* Kukatja, Ngardi

## Selected Details of Artist's Working Life

### Medium and Themes

*Chromacryl*

*acrylic paint on canvas*

*Father's country near Kiwikurra*

*Two Tjukurrpa (Dreamtime) ancestors; Tjangala and Tjapanangka*

*Ancestral Snake*

*Kudiji (initiation) Ceremony*

### **Biography**

*John's story is an interesting one as he has only launched into his painting career in 1999. Before this he had been involved in ceremonial painting and produced only a couple of paintings in 1993 and 1995. John is the son of Donkeyman Lee who was a senior lawman and a reputable painter. He believes that while his father was still alive it was not necessary for him to paint but since Donkeyman's death he has accepted his role to pass on the family heritage. John's paintings have emerged in a distinctive style with the predominance of a black ground giving them a strikingly bold appearance. John emphasises the need to sit and listen and learn from nature, from the country where he gains his wisdom. Being a strong representative for the community, John is an articulate spokesperson. He sees himself as a bridge builder through his ability to communicate across cultures.*

# MATI (BRIDGET) MUDJIDELL

*Born:* c.1935  
*Location:*  
*Skin:* Napanangka  
*Language:* Ngarti, also speaks Kukatja and Walpirri

## SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

### **Medium and Themes**

*Chromacryl*  
*students acrylics on cotton duck*  
*acrylic paint on canvas*

### **Biography**

*One of the major Law Women at Wirrimanu. Mati has also been involved in several publications such as Yarrtji: Six women's stories from the Great Sandy Desert, 1997*  
*Aboriginal Studies Press CANBERRA short-listed for the NSW Premier's History Awards in 1998.*

### **Group Exhibitions**

*1999, East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council, Kununurra*  
*1999, Miliynyin, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
*1999, Miliynyin, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle*  
*1998, Dreamings, Spazio Pitti Arte, Florence, Italy*  
*1998, The Laverty Collection, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney*  
*1997, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs*  
*1997, New Paintings from Balgo Artists, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne*  
*1997, New Paintings by Balgo Women, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne*  
*1997, Dreamings, Arnhem, Netherlands*  
*1997, Daughters of the Dreaming - Sisters Together Strong, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth*  
*1994, Wirrimanu: Aboriginal Art from Balgo, Framed Gallery, Darwin, NT*  
*1994, INDIGENART GALLERY*  
*1993, Aboriginal Art Exhibition, Kung Gubunga, Oasis Gallery, Broadbeach, QLD*  
*1991, Warlayirti Artists Form Balgo Hills, WA, Hogarth Gallery, Sydney*  
*1991, Yapa, Peintres Aborigenes de Balgo et Lajamanu, Baudon Lebon Gallery, Paris*

1991, Aboriginal Art and Spirituality, *High Court, Canberra*  
1990, Songlines – Paintings from Balgo Hills, *Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London*  
1989, Warlayirti Artists Continuing Links with Land, *Coo-ee Aboriginal Art, Sydney*  
1989, Balgo Paintings, *Robert Steele Gallery, Adelaide, SA*  
1989, Recent Paintings from Balgo, *Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, Victoria*  
1989, *Balgo Painting, Dreamtime Gallery, Perth*

### ***Collections***

1997, *Morven Estate*  
*The Kelton Foundation, Santa Monica, USA*  
*Laverty Collection*



## SAM TJAMPITJIN

*Born:* c. 1930  
*Location:*  
*Skin:* Tjampitjin  
*Language:* Kukatja

### SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

#### **Medium and Themes**

*Chromacryl*  
*Students acrylics on cotton duck*  
*Acrylic paint on canvas*

#### **Biography**

##### **Group Exhibitions**

1999, 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Shell Fremantle Print award, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle  
1999, Miliynyin, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney  
1998, Culture Store, Art Gallery, Rotterdam, The Netherlands  
1998, Ngurrara – My own Country, Hogarth galleries, Sydney  
1998, Dreamings, Spazio Pitti Arte, Florence, Italy  
1998, Dreamings, Vlaams-Europeesch Conferentiecentrum, Brussels, Belgium  
1997, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs  
1997, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin  
1997, Dreamings, Arnhem, Netherlands  
1997, Desert Country, Matso's, Broome

1994, The Eleventh National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, *Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*

1990, *The Singing Earth, Chapman Gallery, Canberra*

1990, *Paintings from Kukatja Country, Deutscher Brunswick Street, Melbourne , Victoria*

1990, *Paintings from Balgo, Hogarth Gallery, Sydney*

**Collections**

*Artbank, Sydney*

*The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth*

*Kluge Collection USA*

*Laverty Collection*

**Awards**

1999, *Highly Commended, 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Shell Fremantle Print award, Fremantle Arts Centre,*

# TJUMPO TJAPANANGKA

*Born* 1929  
*Location* Muruwar, north of Kiwirrkurra  
*Skin* Tjapanangka  
*Language* Kukatja, Pintubi

## SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

### Medium and Themes

*Chromacryl*  
*Acrylic on cotton duck*  
*Acrylic paint on canvas and linen*  
*Water, rainmaking, soaks*  
*Wati Kutjarra*  
*Rainbow snakes*  
*Bandicoot, flying ant, dingo spirit, Kangaroo*  
*Tingarri*

### Biography

*Tjumbo is a senior law man and also a Maparn (healer). Incredibly fit and strong for his age, Tjumbo attributes this to his diet of bush food. He speaks adamantly of his childhood in the desert hunting for goanna, porcupine, wallaby, pussy cat, and the construction of spinifex and mud shelters for the wet season. Tjumbo being very sociable loves to meander and chat between bouts of painting. His work resonates with power through the formal application of paint. Tjumbo is a respected speaker for the community.*

### Group Exhibitions

*1998, 15th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin*  
*1997, Big Balgos - Recent Paintings by Warlayirti Artists, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney*  
*1997, Dreamings, Arnhem, Netherlands*  
*1991, Aboriginal Art and Spirituality, High Court Canberra*  
*1990, Aboriginal Art Exhibition, Dreamtime Gallery, Broadbeach, QLD*  
*1990, Paintings from Balgo, WA, Hogarth Gallery, Sydney*  
*1990, Songlines – Paintings from Balgo Hills, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London*  
*1990, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from the Robert Holmes a Court Collection, Touring the USA*  
*1990, L'ete Australien a' Montpellier, Musee Fabre Gallery, Montpellier, France*  
*1989, Muthscapes, Aboriginal Art of the Desert, National Gallery of Victoria*  
*1989, Warlayirti Artists, Bikumarri Gallery, Fremantle, WA*  
*1989, Warlayirti Artists Continuing Links with Land, Coo- ee Aboriginal Art, Sydney*

### Awards

*1997, Gantner Myer Collection*  
*1997, Morven Estate*  
*Art Gallery of Western Australia Perth*  
*National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne,*  
*The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth*  
*Laverty Collection*

# NELLIE NJAMME

*Born:*

*Location:*

*Skin:*

*Language:*

## SELECTED DETAILS OF ARTIST'S WORKING LIFE

### **Medium and Themes**

*Chromacryl*

*students acrylics on cotton duck*

*acrylic paint on canvas*

### **Biography**

#### ***Group Exhibitions***

*1999, East Kimberley Art Awards, Kununurra Arts Council, Kununurra*

*1999, Desert mob '99, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs*

*1998, Dreamings, Spazio Pitti Arte, Florence, Italy*

*1994, Wirrimanu: Aboriginal Art from Balgo, Framed Gallery, Darwin, NT*