

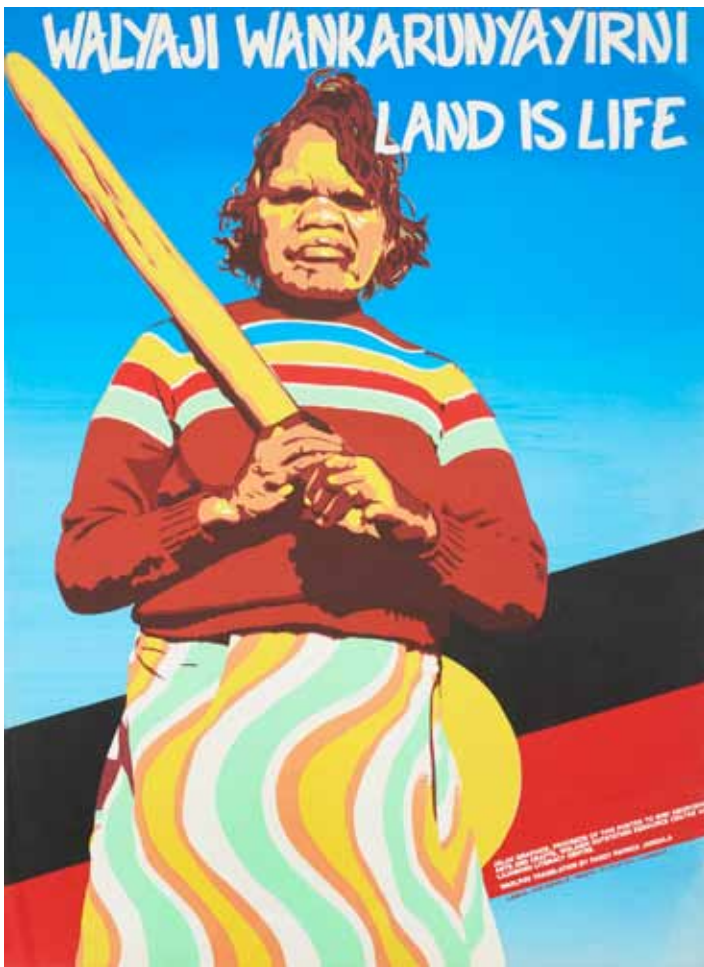
Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla

RESEARCH NOTES

Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla was a Warlpiri artist from Lajamanu in the Tanami Desert of the Northern Territory. She began painting in 1986 and quickly developed her own original style of painting. The *Yulyurlu Education Kit* provides a focus on this unique artist through research notes and activities related to the exhibition.

The *Yulyurlu Lorna Napurrurla Fencer* exhibition, that honors the career of this expressive artist, is one of few curated exhibitions to pay tribute to a desert female painter.

The *Yulyurlu Research Notes* provides a brief introduction to the artist from an educational perspective. More detailed information can be found in the *Yulyurlu Exhibition Catalogue*. Activities are contained in age group specific activity sheets.



Chips Mackinolty
Walyaji Wankarunyayirni: Land is Life 1983
(featuring Lorna Fencer Napurrurla)
silkscreen 98.5 x 72 cm
Jalak Graphics



AUTHORISATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Indigenous people are respectfully advised that names and images of deceased people appear in the *Yulyurlu Catalogue* and *Education Kit*. Where possible permission has been sought from appropriate family members. Images of Lorna Fencer Napurrurla have been reproduced with the consent of her daughter.

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Exhibition Curator: Margie West

Education Kit: Angus Cameron, Nomad Art Productions

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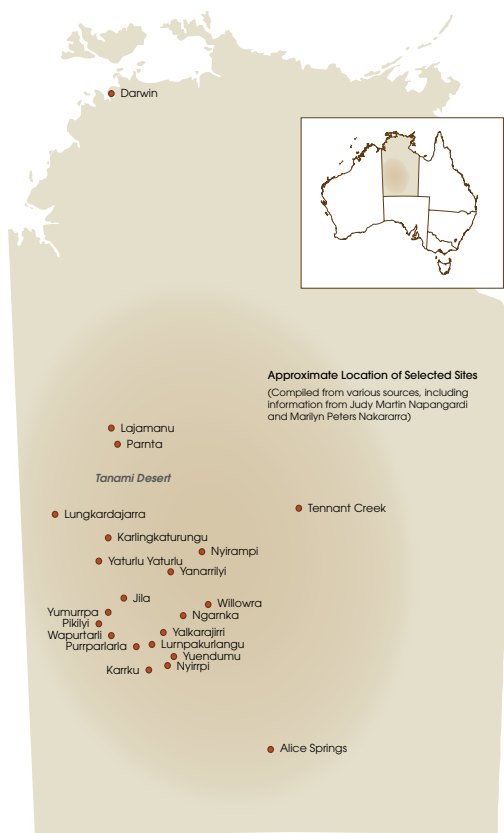
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THE PLACE




Lajamanu (Lar-jar-marnoo) is a small town with a population of about 700 on the northern fringe of the Tanami Desert, one of the most westerly communities of the Northern Territory, about 650 kilometres south of Darwin. The community has a strong sense of cultural identity, helped by the settlement's remoteness, its unified language and its own Aboriginal council. There is a community council, health clinic, store, church, airstrip and school up to year 10.

The landscape around Lajamanu is semi-arid, consisting of spinifex grasses, acacia, grevilleas and occasional eucalyptus. The community is situated close to the Ware Mountain Range.

Traditionally the country belonged to the Gurindji people, who now live more than 100 km further north around Daguragu and Kalkaringi (Wave Hill). In 1948 the Native Affairs Branch of the Federal Government decided to create an Aboriginal Reserve at Catfish, which is a permanent waterhole 600 km north of Yuendumu. Yuendumu, a Warlpiri Aboriginal settlement about 290 km north west of Alice Springs was experiencing drought, and was getting overcrowded with ever more people from outlying areas coming to the settlement.



A road was made from Yuendumu to Catfish and when it was completed, Welfare ordered 25 Warlpiri into a truck and drove them all the way to Hooker Creek where they camped. The creek was flowing, there was a bore and they decided to stay there instead of at Catfish, around 30 km further on. Later, when the Hooker Creek dried up, they may have regretted their decision, but by that time the settlement was already established.



In 1951 another 150 people were relocated to Hooker Creek but they resisted the move and walked 500 kilometers back to Yuendumu. The relocation by truck and successive walk back occurred three times before people settled at Hooker Creek.

In 1962 the Baptist Church appointed resident missionaries at Hooker Creek, with the Hooker Creek Baptist Church built in 1965. In the late 1970s the Gurindji people from Wave Hill area agreed to hand over the country and the Dreaming to the Warlpiri settlers.

The people were very unhappy, taken away from their relatives, their country and its sacred places and displaced in Gurindji country. If ever one needed an illustration of how strongly Aboriginal people are tied to their own "country" it must be this epic tale. But after another transport back to Hooker Creek settlement people stayed; children were born here and although their spiritual homeland remained to the south, people started to call the place home.

*A series of ceremonies were conducted in the late seventies in which the Gurindji of the Wave Hill area "handed over" the country and the "Dreaming" of the Wampana or Spectacled Hare-wallaby, (*Lagorchestes conspicillatus*) to the Warlpiri: a unique occurrence. Ref: Lajamanu Community Health Centre*

(quoted in <http://www.kwhb.com.au/23-lajamanu-community-health-centre.html>)

Today the Warlpiri maintain their language, culture, ceremonies and traditional art. Hooker Creek ceased to be a welfare settlement in the mid 1970s and the Lajamanu Council was the first Community Government Council to be formed in the Northern Territory.

<http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ngvschools/TraditionAndTransformation/>

<http://www.workingfuture.nt.gov.au/Territory%20Growth%20Towns/Lajamanu/Lajamanu.html>

THE PEOPLE

Warlpiri country is located in the Tanami Desert north west of Alice Springs. The main communities in Warlpiri country are Yuendumu, Lajamanu, Nyirpi, and Willowra. Many Warlpiri live in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, and the smaller towns of Central Australia.

The first permanent settlement at Yuendumu was established in 1946 by the Australian Government to deliver rations and welfare services. In 1947 a Baptist mission began there. By 1955, many Warlpiri people had settled in the town. Today an estimated 3,000 people still speak the Warlpiri language. They refer to themselves as 'Yapa' which simply means 'people'.

Social Organization: what is a 'skin' name

In the Western Desert/Central Desert kinship system, there are eight 'skin' or subsection groups that determine a person's marriage partner and ritual connections and responsibilities to land. Having a skin name immediately gives a person a place in Warlpiri society because they have a known set of relationships and rules. For example if you are a Napurrurla, all other Napurrurlas are you sisters. This is why non-Aboriginal people are also given a 'skin' name so everyone knows how to interact with them.

The ideal choice or 'right skin' for a marriage partner is a man's second cousin or, where this is not possible, a man may marry his mother's brother's daughter, i.e. his cross cousin. Lorna Fencer was a Napurrurla and according to the rules she married a Japanangka man and their children belonged to a different subsection group - her daughters belonged to the Napangardi group and her sons belonged to the Japangardi group.

In Warlpiri Law, everything: ceremonies, songs, the country, plants, animals, weather, and so on, also have skin names. Lorna Fencer's country at Yumurrpa belongs to her Napurrurla /Jupurrurla group as well as to Nakamarra and Jakamarra. In this way 'skin' groupings bring the country, plants, animals, ceremony and song into the same system of relationships and obligations that exist between people. So, just as a person must respect their mother's mother, they must also respect their mother's mother's country and ceremony.

The name of the different male and female skin groups is as follows

Female	Male		Female	Male
Napanangka	Japanangka	↔	Napurrurla	Jupurrurla
Napangardi	Japangardi	↔	Nakamarra	Jakamarra
Napaljarri	Japaljarri	↔	Nampijinpa	Jampijinpa
Nungarrayi	Jungarrayi	↔	Nangala	Jangala

(arrows show preferred marriage partners)

Ngurra-kurlu: A way of working with Warlpiri people

by Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Jampijinpa Patrick)

Here are the five important elements of the Warlpiri people

- **Warlalja-Yapa** - Families that are in their skin groups or skin name.
- **Jaru** – the general word for ‘language’ that the people from this land speak.
- **Kuruwarri** – the Law.
- **Juju/manyuwana** – Ceremony.
- **Walya** – the Land.

*All these things govern Yapa lives; this is **ngurra-kurlu**. Everyone in their own way in Australia, in this land, has this. Everybody. These five things. Yapa have all of these. Lines joining circles: All of these are connected to each other. If the **skin** name is not strong, if we don’t use it according to our marriage system law, marrying to the wrong skin group, these others will not be strong as well. Even our **language**; if it is not strong the other four principles will not function well too. This one too, **the law**; if we become lawless, both the country and Yapa will become sick. And this one as well, **ceremony**; if we don’t respect our ceremonies and the rituals that belong to skin groups we will become sick and the country will become sick as well. If we disrespect **the land** we will forget what the land is trying to say. We will disappear as Warlpiri people.*

<http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/resource/DKCRC-Report-41-Ngurra-kurlu.pdf>

Further Research

Paw Media

TV, radio and music recordings from the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu.

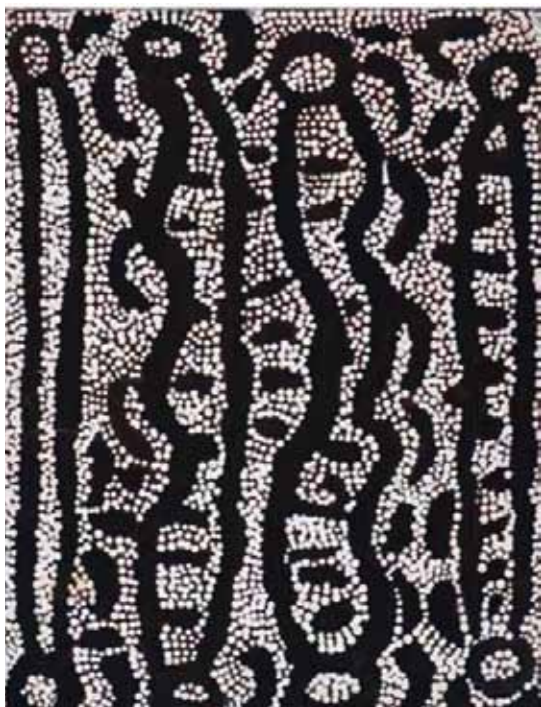
<http://www.pawmedia.com.au/home>

Home and the Warlpiri People - Audio Interview with Aboriginal Artist Malcolm Jagamara

<http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/home-and-the-warlpiri-people-a.php>

The Jukurrpa (Dreaming)

Jukurrpa or the 'Dreaming' (as it is often referred to by non-Indigenous people) relates to the creation of the world. But while the Jukurrpa refers to a period of origin it also continues to the present day as timeless or continuous concept.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yarla, Yam Dreaming 1992
synthetic polymer paint on canvas board
38 x 25 cm

Jukurrpa also stands for the body of law and the ancestral beings who created it. During the Jukurrpa, ancestral beings, moved across the country creating the features of the landscape, plants and animals; performing ceremonies, singing, marrying and fighting. These beings could be humans, or birds, animals or plants – some of whom assumed human form at some point in their journey. At the end of their journeys ancestral beings returned to, or sometimes transformed into landforms such as hills, rocks, waterholes and salt lakes, where their power still resides.

During their journeys the ancestral beings established the moral, practical and spiritual laws that govern all things. The tracks that traverse the physical world of the desert also formed the basis of an intricate network of stories or 'songlines' that contain the laws and rituals on which desert society is based.

These Dreaming lines and associated sites also show the territorial boundaries of the country the ancestors crossed. The boundaries are not always clear-cut however, as ownership can overlap with several groups having joint ownership of the same sites. Generally though, groups are associated with particular places and crossing them or visiting without the permission of custodians could result in conflict.



Lorna Fencer with ceremonial body designs.
(photo: Barbara Glowczewski)

People play a central role in maintaining the social and cosmological order of their world by performing ceremonies. Knowledge of the Jukurrpa or law is held collectively by initiated senior people and is often shared by members of several groups. People who inherit land rights and ceremonial responsibilities via their fathers (*kirda*) cooperate with managers (*kurdungurlu*), who inherit rights via their mothers, in sharing ritual responsibilities for particular Jukurrpa. Both men and women in the desert region have their own separate yet interrelated ceremonies and aspects of this religious law, particularly that owned by the men, is restricted to initiated members of the owning group.



Jukurrpa is also a concept that relates to each individual. It links people to place and provides people with identity and responsibilities towards the place that is part of their Dreaming. When a child is born it is believed to have an association with a particular ancestral realm. Sometimes this association is symbolised by a 'totem', which could be an animal, plant or physical feature. The 'totem' is an expression of personal ties to Jukurrpa. As children grew, learning about the Jukurrpa was as much a part of daily life as learning to find water and food. Learning respect for places of significance, how to look after sacred sites and perform rituals, and how to maintain a relationship with the spiritual and natural world, was an essential part of growing up.

Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yarla 1998
synthetic polymer paint on cotton duck
200 x 148 cm

Ref: *Yiwarra Kuju, The Canning Stock Route Exhibition notes*,
National Museum of Australia.

http://www.nma.gov.au/education/school_resources/temporary_exhibitions/yiwarra_kuju/

Central Desert Art

The traditional art style of the central desert is quite a distinctive - based on a simple set of stylized symbols, such as circles, line, dots, animal tracks and so on. This shared or collective way of painting expresses people's overall social and ceremonial connectedness. Normally traditional designs associated with specific Jukurrpa (ancestral beings) are painted onto the body and ritual objects during ceremonies. These designs recreate the marks made by the original ancestors and are believed to put the participants in touch with the Dreaming.

As an every day activity, desert people also draw on the ground with their fingers when they are telling stories, progressively rubbing out episodes and starting afresh as they go. This is sometime called 'sand talk' with the designs playing an important part in conveying the story's meaning.

see http://www.animation.pawmedia.com.au/?page_id=62

The meaning of a desert symbol varies according on the context or the story being told. A circle, for example, can represent a campsite, a waterhole, a hill or the root of a plant; a wavy line can represent a river, a pathway, a snake, a root system and so on. Each symbol can also convey a number of meanings at the same time - and this will be understood according to the level of a person's ceremonial knowledge. Using this simple set of symbols artists can compose pictures of either simplicity or great complexity to convey their ancestral stories. The act of painting itself can be very meaningful because it replicates the marks or imprints that Ancestral beings originally made upon the land - evoking and reconnecting the painter to the Jukurrpa.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Ngarlajiyi Jukurrpa c.1991
Synthetic polymer paint on art board
50 x 60 cm
Gift of Sharon Monty 1992
Berndt Museum of Anthropology, Perth

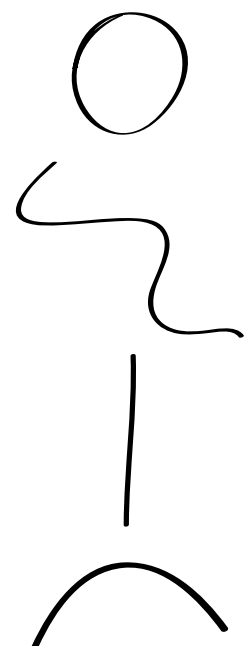
Potential meaning of desert symbols

Circle: hill, waterhole, campsite, tuber.

Wavy line: river, pathway, snake, root system.

Line: pathway, spear, digging stick, club.

U shape: person sitting, boomerang.



The introduction of acrylic painting provided desert artists with a new public context to reproduce their ceremonial images. It also freed them to develop more personal ways to express their group identity. Because men's designs are often sacred in the ceremonial context, new ways were developed to protect their integrity. Initially the designs were modified with more complex background dotting, which also developed into an important part of the work's aesthetic. The dot soon became a signature motif of the new acrylic painting movement. Over time, many artists like Lorna Fencer, who initially painted in the classic desert style, developed their own individual way of painting, sometimes using very few recognizable desert symbols.



Irrespective of the individual style being used, the majority of desert paintings made for sale are religious illustrations about the Jukurrpa (ancestral beings). The classic way of depicting the journey of these beings is with circles (representing the sites they visited), joined by lines (symbolizing their pathways).

Because such illustrations are about real places and the mythological events that occurred there, the paintings are like landscapes or maps of ancestral journeys. The imagery indicates the direction and spatial relationships between sites in an idealized way, very much like a European subway map.

(Photo: Beverly Knight)

In the painting (opposite) women digging for yams are depicted by 'U' shapes along with their digging sticks (the short lines). In the middle of the painting is the epicenter of the Yarla Yam Dreaming at Yumurrpa with its complex root system extending out across the country in the cross-like formation.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yam Dreaming 1986
synthetic polymer paint on canvas 35 x 44 cm

THE ARTIST



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
(Photo: Peter Eve)

Name: Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla

Born: c.1920s, Yumurrpa country (Tanami Desert), NT

Died: 7 December 2006, Katherine, NT

Language: Warlpiri

Heritage Country: Yumurrpa, NT

Dreaming: Wapirti (Bush Carrot), Yarla (Yam, Bush Potato), Yarla-Pama (Caterpillar)

Napurrurla is custodian for the sacred country of Yumurrpa, and for the Yarla-Pama (Caterpillar), Ngarlajiyi (Pencil Yam) and Yarla (Bush Potato) Dreamings of this site. She also has ancestral rights over Seed, Bush Tomato, Kangaroo Tucker, Bush Raisin, Water, Snake and Bush Plum Dreamings for the Napurrurla-Japurrurla, and Jakamarra-Nakamarra skin groups.

Early Life

Lorna Napurrurla Fencer, whose Aboriginal name is Yulyurlu was born in the Tanami Desert in the 1920s. The exact date and time of her birth is unknown as records were not kept at the time and place of her birth. She was born at Yumurrpa, in her father's country, not far from Jila (Chilla Well) situated near the Granites Mine. This is an important Yam Dreaming site in the Tanami Desert and was named after the many rocky outcrops and large rocky boulders that dominate the local landscape.

During her childhood Napurrurla lived a traditional life in the bush and developed rich knowledge of the country around her. Napurrurla grew up with her parents and a close-knit extended family and began learning stories and ceremonial designs at an early age. As a young girl Napurrurla would have participated in ceremonies where traditional designs were depicted on objects and participant's bodies. Colours would have been made from natural ochres, animal fat, clay and charcoal applied with fingers and sticks.

In 1949 many Warlpiri people were compulsorily transported to the government settlement at Lajamanu (originally called Hooker Creek) situated in the country of Gurindji people on the edge of the Tanami Desert, 250 miles to the north of their own country around Yuendumu. It is thought that Napurrurla joined the community at



Lorna Fencer in front of her painting, *Caterpillar Dreaming*, Mary Place Gallery, Sydney 2002.
(Photo: courtesy of Japingka Gallery)

Lajamanu in about 1975 when she was in her 50's. She was amongst the fifth group of people who were brought from Yuendumu to live at Lajamanu at that time.

Napurrurla was to regard Lajamanu as her home base for the rest of her life. Although from about 2001 until her death in 2006 she spent most of her time in Katherine and travelling elsewhere, she would always return to Lajamanu when she could.

Yulyurlu's Artistic Development and Style

The art and craft made at Lajamanu in the early 1980's included boomerangs, spears and shields made by the men, and flat dishes, water carriers, dancing boards, digging sticks, clubs and human hair string made by the women. Lorna and the other women applied body paint designs of ground-up ochre mixed with animal fat onto their carved wooden dishes and dancing boards made for sale. Later when acrylic paint was introduced these usually were used instead of natural pigments.

Napurrurla began to paint in 1986 (in her 60s) when a painting course was offered at the Education Centre at Lajamanu School. She first painted with enamel and acrylic paint on recycled building materials.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Dish c.1986
synthetic polymer paint on wood
62 x 14 x 3.9 cm



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Warna Jukurrpa (Snake Dreaming) 1986
enamel paint on plywood
76.6 x 57.5 cm

The following year, Lajamanu artists began to work on canvas. Napurrurla first began painting in the classic style of Warlpiri art with symbols often distributed amongst fields of dots. Over time Napurrurla moved away from these classic abstract elements to more descriptive interpretations of her Dreaming by painting foliage, flowers, tubers and root structures. The best way to describe this style is a form of stylized naturalism. Her brushwork became more energetic, with painterly layers of glowing pigment. She was also a gifted colourist who was able to combine a range of seemingly impossible colour combinations into successful compositions. This stylistic development happened over a period of about 10 years and most of her recognised artwork comes from the more mature period of Napurrurla's life from 1995 onwards.

During this time, most artists at Lajamanu maintained a strong connection to their traditional way of painting with circles, lines dots and so on, as a mark of their Warlpiri identity. Because Yulyurlu's work was so unconventional, her fellow artists often dismissed her painting as 'rubbish'. Outside of her community though, collectors and galleries

admired her experimental and energetic style of painting and she became one of the most sought-after artists in the region.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Ngapa Manu Yapa 1999
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
182 x 94.6 cm

Art Award 2001. She won the Conrad Jupiters Casino, Gold Coast City Art Award, Queensland in 1997 and was invited to participate in The John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, in the same year.

Napurrurla passed away in 2006, aged in her eighties.

In the late 1990's Napurrurla moved to Katherine and strengthened her relationship with the Mimi Arts and Crafts community art centre when it reopened in 2001 after the devastating Katherine flood. By this time she was applying the paint freely and boldly to produce brightly coloured works to illustrate her ancestral stories. During this time she concentrating more on to the graphic design of her works and often over layered her motifs to create an effect very much like stenciling.

Napurrurla soon became the backbone of the Mimi art centre and one of its high profile artists, (read Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen's account of her relationship with Napurrurla in the Exhibition Catalogue). While Napurrurla worked at Mimi she also continued to work with a range of art dealers and began to exhibit widely – to date this includes over 60 group exhibitions and at least 20 solo shows nationally.

Napurrurla held her first solo exhibition at Melbourne's Alcaston Gallery in 1997. Her work has been included in major exhibitions of Aboriginal Art, including *Contemporary Aboriginal Art* from The Robert Holmes à Court Collection, *Aboriginal Art and Spirituality* at The High Court of Australia, Canberra, 1991 and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander*



Lorna Napurrurla and her daughter Judy Martin
Napangardi at Vivien Anderson Gallery, 2005.
(Photo: courtesy Japingka Gallery)

Painting at Lajamanu



The painting movement at Lajamanu began in an atmosphere of disagreement amongst Warlpiri people. The arguments about whether to paint for sale or not to paint began in 1985. Traditionally, all Jukurrpa painting was placed on the human body, on the ground, or on other surfaces such as rocks, or sacred wooden objects. Some of the senior Warlpiri people, especially the community leader Maurice Luther Jupurrurla, believed that their designs should be viewed only in the ceremonial context and not sold for money to people who didn't understand them. The School Principal at the time witnessed these debates:

The discussions soon grew into a community-wide debate, eventually developing into a full-scale argument, with passionate adherents on the sides of those in favour of painting for sale and those against. I attended many of the community meetings when this matter was passionately discussed, and it was clear that the Lajamanu people were not prepared to proceed with the 'painting business' until consensus had been reached. I cannot remember Lorna Napurrurla being present at any of those meetings and if she did attend, she did not speak up.

(Christine Nicholls, Yulyurlu: Lorna Fencer Napurrurla, Exhibition Catalogue, page 49)

After Maurice Luther died in 1985 public opinion quickly changed and people began to favour the introduction of acrylic painting that was already being successfully practiced by their relations south at Yuendumu and Papunya. The Central Desert movement had in fact been initiated at Papunya in 1971 after the senior men became involved in a school mural project. The interest in painting spread rapidly initially among the men and soon it developed into one of the most significant and influential art movements in contemporary Australian art.

Focus question

- Initially people in the Lajamanu community were reluctant to paint on canvas and boards, there was much discussion and argument. What was the basis for the argument not to paint for money? How was the issue resolved?



Lorna Fencer painting (Photos: courtesy Japingka Gallery)

THE ART

The Dreaming cycles of Napurrurla's art

Dreaming Cycles, known as Jukurrpa and are at the heart of Yulyurlu's Warlpiri identity, they are the Jukurrpa that she owned and painted as an inheritance from her father and her mother.

There are three closely connected Yam or Yam related Jukurrpa cycles that are central to Napurrurla's art. They are known as the Yam Dreaming complex and consist of three elements:

- **Big Yam**

Yarla (Sweet Potato or Large Yam), Ipomoea costata, also known as Puurda and Yaljiirpa

- **Small Yam**

Ngarlajiyi (Pencil Yam, Small Yam, or Bush Carrot)

- **Caterpillar (Yam Grub)**



Yarla, (Yam or Bush Potato) 1997
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas
277 x 181.5 cm



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Wapirti, Yam 2002
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
86 x 61 cm.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Caterpillar Dreaming 2004
synthetic polymer paint on linen
125 x 89 cm

Yarla-Pama (Caterpillar or Yam Grub) sometimes referred to by the Warlpiri name *Iaju* (simply meaning grub). The Jukurrpa name for this caterpillar is Jajurtuma. Yarla-Pama literally translates as 'yam delicacy', a reference to the grub's liking for yam leaves. The Yarla-Pama is a dark green, striped, hairless caterpillar that eventually metamorphoses into a moth. It lives by eating the foliage of both large and small yam plants, typically leaving nothing but their woody stalks.

Sometimes the three themes or elements of the Jukurrpa are shown together in the same painting. Other times they are shown as individual elements of the Jukurrpa. Napurrurla returned time and again to this principal artistic theme, for which she became celebrated and for which she is, and will be, remembered.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Kangaroo Tucker 2004
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
170 x 120 cm

These three elements of Napurrurla's Jukurrpa are located in an area around Yumurrpa and Wapurtarli. (near Yuendumu and north of Lajamanu). A cave at Yumurrpa is regarded as the centre of the yam root in the Yam Dreaming, is also a source of good drinking underground water. Yulyurlu depicts this sweet water in a group of paintings she describes as Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming).

In addition to the Yam, Yakajirri (Bush Raisins, *Solanum centrale*) and Wanakiji, (Bush Tomato, *Solanum chippendale*), are Dreamings and plants growing in the vicinity of the same (Yam) Dreaming site. Lorna Napurrurla occasionally represents these bush foods that are also part of this broader ecosystem and interconnected Dreaming stories.

Often Napurrurla would create circular shapes from which the long, horizontal yam tubers (*ngamarna*) would flow in recurring patterns, evoking the very origin of life. In other works Napurrurla deliberately masked the oval shaped root structure, covering the network of conjoined circles and tubers with shimmering dotting, often bringing to her work the heightened sense of the Jukurrpa.

In this part of the country many Dreaming pathways crisscross each other. At their points of intersection each Dreaming becomes implicated in another. Hence Napurrurla's less frequently depicted works and their subject matter should be regarded as branches of her most important subject matter, the Yam Dreaming complex.

These bush tucker and bush seed Dreamings also relate equally to her late father's Marlujarra Jukurrpa (Two Kangaroos Dreaming), the creator beings who brought many kinds of bush tucker into being, including bush tomatoes and bush raisins.

Napurrurla also was entitled to paint other themes such as the Rain Dreaming. One related to her country at Yumurrpa where there is a major water hole, and another Water Dreaming, inherited through her mother's line. This one is connected to the Two Snakes and Giant Python Dreamings that passes through Purrparlarla (Wild Cat Bore near Mt Doreen). Lorna also depicted the Snake Dreaming, the *pirntina*, woma python, that is closely associated with the Lover Boy story that Lorna loved to tell about an old man in the form of a snake who runs off with his young lover. The artist often depicted this with energetic rhythmic lines to imitate the coupling of the snakes.

Napurrurla loved colour and the vibrancy of the acrylic paint palette. Her favourite colours were blue, aqua and warm yellows, reds, oranges and bright pinks although she would use all colors. It was this vibrancy and the energy of her work that first attracted attention to her art.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Warna, Snake 1997
synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 x 180 cm

ACTIVITY

Read the catalogue essay by Christine Nicholls titled *Painting Alone: Lorna Fencer Napurrurla*

Focus question

Dreaming Cycles, known as Jukurrpa are at the heart of Napurrurla's art. Explain this connection. How does Napurrurla convey the heightened sense of the Dreaming cycles through her painting? Choose three paintings to illustrate your observations.

(The following is an extract taken from catalogue essay by Christine Nicholls titled *Painting Alone: Lorna Fencer Napurrurla*, paragraph three page 51).

When in May 1986 the women followed suit and began painting, Lorna Napurrurla participated with similar zeal. But right from the beginning, other Warlpiri made overtly disparaging comments about Lorna's (often rushed) efforts, describing her artworks as 'rubbish ones'.

Focus question

- Why do you think the other Warlpiri artists described Napurrurla's work as rubbish ones? Compare with a Warlpiri painting from the same time? Can you think of other painters in Western art history whose works were put down by their peers or the art establishment at the time? Compare and contrast the work of one of these artists to the work of Napurrurla in the context of the time and place. What conclusions can you draw from the comparison?

Yam Dreaming Stories

To understand the Yam Dreaming narratives, it is important to know that all Dreamings figures (or heroes) are able to take on human forms as well as being a physical part of the natural world, that is as animals plants, or a feature in the landscape such as a hill, waterhole or cave. So the Yams are thought of as both people and as yams, or in the case of Jajurtuma, as both caterpillar and man.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yarla Dreaming 1996
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
188 x 86 cm

One of the most important parts of the Yam story is about sharing limited food resources. Yams are an important part of the diet for Warlpiri people. Also important is the need to control violence and revenge between people. The story tells that violence between people is a bad thing, but also recognizes that violence and revenge does happen. However when it does it needs to be regulated and controlled and to take place within laws and rules.

Keep these things in mind as you read the following Yam Dreamings story.

The Battle of Yumurrpa

'The story is about two Jakamarra brothers, Yumurrpa (the older, Big Yam) and Wapurtarli (the younger, Small Yam). Over a long period of time two groups associated with the brothers engaged in a series of battles to the death, and in the course of these disputes many followers on both sides were slaughtered. Eventually the Big Yam people from Yumurrpa prevailed over the Small Yam people. At various points in these savage and bloody skirmishes other groups became involved as well: Jajurtuma, the Caterpillar man, and those who followed him, and also the Ngapa Jukurrpa (Water Dreaming) people, who were drawn into the violence from the Karlingkaturungu side. Today the bodies of the fallen can be seen as one draws near the Yumurrpa site, in the form of many largish, variably shaped, bright white rocks strewn all over the ground. These rocks are thought to have ancestral power. In Yumurrpa itself there are two trees that are thought to be the two Jakamarra brothers.

Although the Big Yam brother who had set off from the south, from Nyurripatu, defeated all of his Small



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yarla 1997
 synthetic polymer paint on cotton duck
 200 x 148 cm

Yam brother's people, this did not mean the end. The younger brother, seeking vengeance for the loss of his Small Yam people, decided to settle the matter by challenging his older brother to a fight unto death. The pair chose to fight in an ancient form of Warlpiri ritual combat, involving two male parties either kneeling or sitting cross-legged on the ground opposite each other. Each party then began hacking into the other combatant with his wirliki (hooked, boomerang). The pointed, hooked end of the wirliki, known as its ear (langa), is as sharply hewn as a scythe, so this kind of single combat allowed for no escape. In the course of this bloody fight, both brothers suffered deep, open wounds, and the leg of the Jakamarra from Wapurtarli was amputated by his brother's wirliki. At a point where it seemed inevitable that both brothers would die, the one from Wapurtarli convinced his brother that they should cease fighting, and the two brothers made their peace.

Using supernatural powers, the injured man, having bound his damaged leg with a nyirawu vine (resembling a small snake), 'sung' his leg back into health, and limped back to Wapurtarli.

The peacemaking after such long and destructive fighting is an important metaphor or example for Warlpiri people generally.

In a number of her works, Napurrurla represents the boomerangs used by the brothers and their 'armies': the *wirliki*, and the curved boomerangs called *karli*.

In traditional society yams were a staple diet for Warlpiri and used for feeding large numbers of people during big initiation ceremonies.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Boomerang 1998
 synthetic polymer paint on
 canvas,
 150 x 100 cm

An important aspect of the Yam Dreaming stories or narratives relates to mapping the yams' growth and distribution patterns throughout the Warlpiri desert regions. According to the narrative, the Ngarlajiyi or Wapurtarli Jukurrpa (Pencil Yam Dreaming) spreads out from Ngarnka, or Mt Leichhardt, moving towards Wapurtarli, and eventually arriving at Yumurrpa, or Cave Hole Well, the country where the major Yam drama unfolded. This is demonstrated by the ability of Yams to shift identity and change between human form and yam form.'

(Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla Catalogue article titled *Painting Alone: Lorna Fencer Napurrurla* by Christine Nicholls, pages 36 – 42).



Yarla, Bush Yam 1997
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas
130 x 123 cm



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Yarla and Yapa 1997
synthetic polymer paint on linen
120 x 60 cm

The complex root structure of the yam is shown here emanating from two circular roots shown top and bottom. The yam is both an important dietary staple for desert people and also has religious significance for artists like Lorna Fencer who inherited rights to the Yam Dreaming via her father. The Yam is situated at her home country at Yumurrpa where there is a deep underground well. The yams are dug up by *Yapa* (people) with digging sticks and then roasted.

PLANT USE

- Big Yam



Yarla, bush potato, *Ipomoea costata*. by Milton Andrews.
Department of Natural Resources,
Environment, the Arts and Sport
(NRETAS). Northern Territory Government.



Digging for yams with a metal digging stick
Photo: Beverly Knight, 1997

Yarla (Sweet Potato or Large Yam), *Ipomoea costata*, also known as Puurda and Yaljirrpa.

The bush potato is a fast growing creeping shrub which grows to 200mm in height with a spread of 1-4 metres. Longer branches creep along the ground and sometimes climb up trees. The plant has leathery leaves and large purplish-pink trumpet flowers which mostly bloom in the summer after rains.

The bush potato as a staple food for the Warlpiri people provides nutrition under harsh desert conditions and can be harvested at any time of the year. The tubers or swollen roots can grow as big as a person's head.

Three types of tuber can be found under one bush. The first is found on the long runners and are only produced in good seasons. These roots can go down as far as a metre into soft sand to where the tubers are found. The second type of tubers are found on the sideways roots and can be located up to 3 metres from the plants base. These are more difficult to find. Aboriginal people locate them by looking for cracks in the ground or by hitting the ground with their digging sticks until they detect a hollow sound. The third kind is found beneath the mature plant. These can be quite large but as they are usually older can be hard and woody and of little value as food.

While they are a favourite food for Aboriginal people the vitamin C content is low. The high moisture content, 50 percent or more, enables people eating large amounts of them to survive for considerable periods of time without water, especially in the cooler months.

The Warlpiri use a digging stick to dig for the tubers and a special stone tool as a spoon or scraper when eating them. They are often cooked in the hot earth beside the fire; the taste is similar to a sweet potato.

(Ref: *Bushfires and Bushtucker* by Peter Latz, page 214).



Yarla, bush potato, *Ipomea costata* (Photo: Glenn Wightman)



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Untitled (Yam) 2000
acrylic paint on canvas
135 x 220 cm



• Small Yam

Ngarlajiyi or Wapirti (Pencil Yam, Small Yam, or Bush Carrot)

Vigna lanceolata

Yapirti, pencil yam, *Vigna lanceolata*
(Photo: Glenn Wightman)

The pencil yam is a trailing perennial herb or creeper with a long taproot. The plant may be erect but is more commonly covering a large area with bright green leaves and yellow flowers. It is usually found near watercourses or at the base of granite hills. It is encouraged by fire and grows after rain at any time of the year.



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla
Wapirti, *White Bush Potato* 2002
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
157 x 200 cm

The edible swollen roots are an important food for Aboriginal people of the Tanami desert. The juicy, starchy tubers are bland to taste and can be eaten raw or more often cooked in hot sand and ashes. The green leaves often die off about a month after rain. This is the best time to harvest the yams but makes them hard to find. Aboriginal people locate the underground portions by recognising the dry stems and leaves and digging down to the tubers. This plant also has buried pods like small white peanuts, which are also eaten.

(Ref: *Bushfires and Bushtucker* by Peter Latz, page 296).



Digging Stick c.1986
synthetic polymer paint on wood
117 x 4.7 cm (diameter)

THE EXHIBITION

How did the exhibition come about?

In 2010 Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen (Manager of Mimi Arts and Crafts in Katherine) approached Darwin curator Margie West and Darwin arts touring organization, Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring, to see if they would be interested in curating an exhibition about Lorna Fencer Napurrurla on behalf of the Art Centre. Napurrurla worked at Mimi for a period of about five years from about 2001 and had previously sold work to them on and off since the early 1980s when she visited from Lajamanu. Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen had wanted to organise an exhibition of her work and in 2011 the time seemed right, given that a suitable period had elapsed since the artist's death.

The intention of the Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla exhibition and catalogue is to highlight the contribution this talented and often irreverent artist made to the Central Desert art movement and reposition her as a major force in contemporary Australian art. (From the *Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla* catalogue introduction by Margie West)

The Role of the Curator

A curator of an exhibition is the person who is in charge of organising it. The curator decides which work will be shown, the title, content, design and size of the exhibition and the order in which it will be seen. The curators may write or edit material such as a catalogue, room brochure and explanatory text panels. Curators are ultimately accountable for the safety of the display and the supervision of the venue.

In this case the exhibition curator is responsible for selecting the work and contacting dealers, private owners, other public and private galleries to arrange to loan of the work. They also oversee the development of the exhibition, transportation and insurance of works; they supervise the installation of the exhibition at the venue and liaise with other staff to develop promotional and educational material.

Exhibitions such as *Yulyurlu* rely on a curator to locate and present the best representative works by the artist. Curators often specialise in a particular area of art. In this case the curator is Margie West who is a long-time curator in the Northern Territory and specialises in Aboriginal Art.

ACTIVITY

Focus question

Imagine you were a curator in an important art gallery. You have been asked to hang three works by Lorna Napurrurla on the gallery walls. Which three works would you choose? Write a gallery wall panel to accompany the works and explain why they are important.

When an installation is being placed in a museum context who should supervise and have final say in the installation in regard to placement of parts, lighting and signage? Discuss with reference to a particular artwork.

The Curator - Margie West

Margie West is the former Curator of Aboriginal Art and now Emeritus Curator, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. She has a Post Graduate Degree in Anthropology from The Australian National University and has worked for 40 years in museum curation. Margie West has been involved in a range of programs including heritage maintenance and museum development for Aboriginal communities. She is the founder of the *Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, has published extensively on Aboriginal art, and has curated many international and national touring Aboriginal art exhibitions, including *The Inspired Dream; Rainbow Sugarbag and Moon; Kuruwarri; Hermannsburg Potters; Hot Wax: an exhibition of Australian, Aboriginal and Indonesian Batik*, *Transitions: 17 Years of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, *ReCoil: Change & Exchange in Coiled Fibre Art* and *Yalangbara, Art of the Djang'kawu*.

Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring

Artback NT is the producer of *Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla* and is the Northern Territory's visual and performing arts touring agency. The purpose of Artback NT is to take art to and from remote and regional areas, linking communities, empowering artists, facilitating and delivering quality cultural experiences.

Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring is the Northern Territory's visual and performing arts touring agency. The organisation works with individuals, groups and arts based organisations to present and tour a dynamic and exciting range of arts experiences across the Territory. The touring program is diverse, incorporates strong local content and reflects both Indigenous and non-Indigenous talent and expression.

Their goals are to:

1. To strengthen the capacity of Artback NT to deliver a balanced visual and performing arts touring program offering innovation, diversity and excellence;
2. To create, develop and strengthen the touring environment for the benefit of communities across Australia;
3. To ensure that Artback NT is acknowledged and recognised as the principle arts touring organisation in the Northern Territory with strong community support and established networks;
4. To operate in a highly professional and sustainable manner.

<http://www.artbacknt.com.au/>

ACTIVITY

- **Focus question**

What is the role and purpose of Artback NT? Why is this organisation important? How does its activities enhance and reflect us as Australian people?



Visions of Australia

Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla is funded by Visions of Australia, a Federal initiative which aims to enable more Australians to enjoy diverse culture by accessing exhibitions of cultural material. It provides funding to eligible organisations to develop and tour exhibitions of Australian cultural material across Australia.

Visions Australia is administered from The Federal Office for the Arts (OFTA) which develops and administers programs and policies that encourage excellence in art, support for cultural heritage and public access to arts and culture.

Work by arts and cultural organisations and artists can inspire and challenge us, provoke new thoughts and ideas, and give us fresh perspectives on the world.

OFTA believes all Australians, whether in regional areas or major cities, should have access to artistic and cultural activities, performances and exhibitions.

The funding and support we provide helps artists and organisations shape our cultural landscape, increase cultural diversity, and inspire, educate and entertain audiences across Australia and around the world.

The Office for the Arts supports Australia's rich cultural and Indigenous sectors by:

- Developing policy, research and statistics
- Administering legislation and funding
- Supporting elite national arts training institutions
- Managing the National Portrait Gallery and Artbank
- Working with portfolio agencies to achieve the Australian Government's cultural and Indigenous objectives
- Overseeing the National Network to deliver national Indigenous art, culture, languages and broadcasting programs.

<http://www.arts.gov.au/about/what-we-do>

ACTIVITY

- **Focus question**

How are exhibitions like Yulyurlu financially supported? Where does the money come from to put the exhibition together? How is the money spent? How do you apply to receive money to curate and tour an exhibition?

WHAT ARE ABORIGINAL ART CENTRES?

During her lifetime Lorna Fencer worked for the Warnayaka Art Centre at Lajamanu as well as Mimi Arts and Crafts in Katherine. Art Centres are community-based enterprises which provide economic, social and cultural benefits to their members and communities. Art Centres are owned and managed by Aboriginal people in their own communities. Art Centres are professionally managed to ensure ethical support for the production, marketing and distribution of authentic Aboriginal art.

The charter for most art centres is to:

- Respect culture
- Make culturally authentic artworks
- Ensure Aboriginal ownership of their businesses or enterprises
- Fair returns to artists

Art Centres are a vital part of community life. As well as providing much needed income and employment opportunities they support the maintenance of culture in communities by providing a focus for family connection, social and cultural activities and the means to celebrate Aboriginal identity. <http://www.desart.com.au/>

Aboriginal art centres play a vital role in their communities, acting as a focus for creative activity and the marketing of Aboriginal art to the wider world. There are now more than 60 such centres, located remote and regional areas Australia wide. Lists of the community centres in the central desert and Top End regions of Australia are on the Desart and ANKAAA Web sites.

Most have developed under the guidance of Aboriginal councils and management committees. These committees have employed arts advisors, usually from outside the community, with skills in art production or marketing to run the centres. Many communities continue to support art centres as their primary tool for marketing because they are able to maintain control over where and how their art is marketed.

The role of the art centre in community life has been described by Patrick Mung Mung, then Chairman of the Artists Council at Warmun, in August 2000:

"For our people and our kids so we carry it on with them. So they can take it on, like us, take it on from the old people, but they still come here...young people so the art centre is good to be a centre. It reminds the kids so they got to learn from this. Then they got strong. Then they know the painting. But the real thing. We should take them to the country. Show them what's left in the country with these old people and what they have taught us."

References

<http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/regions/art-centres.php>

Altman, J. and Taylor, L., eds.1990 "Marketing Aboriginal Art in the 1990s", Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

Wright, F.1999. "The Art and Craft Story: The Survey of 39 Aboriginal Community Art Centres in Remote Australia, Making Art Strong ... Being Strong ", Volume 1, Canberra: ATSIC.

ACTIVITY

- **Focus question**

What is an Aboriginal Art Centre? Where are they located, how are they managed and what do they do? What are the benefits to the local people from having an Art Centre in their community? Answer in reference to a particular Australian Art Centre.

Mimi Aboriginal Art and Craft

Mimi is Katherine's only Aboriginal owned and operated not for profit art centre. More than 50 per cent of sales are returned to the artists with the remaining proceeds going towards running the art centre and providing customers with an ethical way to purchase Indigenous artwork. Visitors to Mimi can often enjoy the experience of Artists painting at the art centre.

Representing Artists from the entire Katherine region, Mimi collects artwork from an expansive 380,000 sq km. The Katherine region spans from the Tanami Desert in the west up to the Kimberley's and across to the saltwater and freshwater people of Arnhem Land.

Mimi's artwork is as diverse as the lands it represents; styles include polymer paint on canvas, bark painting, fibre weaving, jewellery, didgeridoos, limited edition prints, carving and weaponry.

<http://mimiarts.com/>

The Warnayaka Art & Cultural Aboriginal Corporation

Warnayaka Art Centre is located in Lajamanu is owned and operated by Warlpiri people. The art centre provides local children and young people with a strong inheritance of cultural and artistic knowledge handed down by daily interaction with their elders. The Art Centre hosts the culturally and traditionally strong creation stories of the Lajamanu people.

The centre is known for free style art, with strong brushwork, intermingled with dots, to illustrate important religious stories.

Paintings produced by the older people often involve transferring traditional designs on to canvas using acrylics. They still remain faithful to the old designs, colours and bold dot work. Paint is used liberally and with confidence, demonstrating the artists' intimate knowledge of the subject and country where the stories originate.

The artists are committed to transferring their culture to younger members of the community and have a strong connection with the students in the education system. Regular sessions are held to promote this.

<http://www.artcollector.net.au/Assets/552/1/Warnayaka.pdf>



Lajamanu keeps culture alive and builds business

See video on every day life at the art centre

<http://www.indigenous.gov.au/index.php/stories/video03/>

Video Transcript: Warnayaka Art Centre Interview with the artists and Manager Louisa Erglis

NARRATOR: It's early morning in Lajamanu and the arts centre bus is doing what it does every day, picking up its star painters.

This is Lilly Nungarrayi a Warlpiri elder, she's almost 80, but no one's really sure. This morning Lilly is doing what she does very morning, catching a ride to work.

LOUISA ERGLIS: It's a daily routine picking up the artists, taking them up to the arts centre or they might want to be dropped at the shop on the way up. And it's their van it belongs to them, the store gave it to them.

NARRATOR: Lilly lives in Lajamanu a remote community of about 1000 people smack bang in the heart of Australia, on the edge of the Tanami desert. Established as a welfare settlement in the late '40s, formerly known as Hooker Creek. The Warlpiri first arrived here in the 50's on the back of a truck from Yuendumu in the south.

WOMEN: Morning. Good morning.

NARRATOR: Today this fiercely traditional community is using art to maintain our culture and to build a viable business.

PETER JIGILI: Good morning

NARRATOR: And the Warnayaka Arts and Cultural Centre a local community initiative is the driving force in creating this thriving cultural and economic hub. Each morning the men and women gather at the Arts centre to listen to men and women like Jerry, and also artists like Lilly, tell their ancient stories to the young ones.

LILLY NUGARRAYI HARGRAVES: Dreaming...we're painting and teaching our real dreaming. And today we are teaching the young ones to paint. School kids, junior boys, junior girls.


NARRATOR: Even though school's out today, here at the Arts Centre, the teaching never stops.

HARGRAVES: Now kids are painting dreaming stories the right way.

ERGLIS: This is one of the key things the elders want to happen in the community. They are really concerned about culture passing from the older people down to the younger people like this. So this is one of the key directives from the board that I have.

ARTIST: Woman dreaming

JIGILI: People of this community started feeling that our Arts Centre is important to everyone here in the community.



NARRATOR: Peter's right. When famous artists like Jerry Patrick Jangala share their sacred stories, the young men are all ears.

JERRY JANGALA PATRICK: These here are men sitting and working. They're making boomerangs. I use the stone axe to make the boomerang. This and this it's all my country. My country - my dreaming. (Singing) This country is boomerang country. Every man has two boomerangs. This is my country.

NARRATOR: It's the holistic approach at Warnayaka, a painting one day is a shared bush experience the next.

PATRICK: This is how you do it - just like this. But in the past they used a flat rock. I'll pour the oil into the little cups. Like this.

NARRATOR: Just like his father taught him it's now Jerry's turn to pass on the sacred knowledge.

PATRICK: With fat - they used goanna fat to do this. I showed you mob this, so you mob can learn, make it and keep it strong.

ERGLIS: The other benefit of having the children here is they see their people working so they see the role models of the staff working they see the old people working and that's probably one of the most lasting memories that any of the kids will have in this community.

NARRATOR: It's hard not to be effected by the ancient energies filling this room.

ERGLIS: I'm just thinking about how hard they work.

HARGRAVES: Who does it belong to?

KIDS: It's for the baby.

HARGRAVES: I pass on my Seed Dreaming story for you to use to dance to. If I had a baby I'd carry it in a coolamon. Pay attention - carry the baby in the coolamon. The coolamon's design is also used for women's dancing. And now you kids will be able to use it when you are older.

NARRATOR: And that's exactly what Jerry's hoping this young mob will do, use the knowledge he's giving them to build a strong future.

PATRICK: This is the flower and this is the seed. It's the seed here - the seed.

NARRATOR: A local initiative that's preserving culture and making it fun. As well as being a place to paint Warnayaka provides regular employment for some of the mob in Lajamanu.

ERGLIS: We have four funded positions and then if any of them have a bit of time off well then we can fill up with casuals there. So any spare funding that we have or spare money that comes in from sales of art we like to put on as many people as we can. There's always a lot to do here.

ARTS WORKER: For myself I like working here at the arts centre. I like working with the old people to. They're telling me stories too, about my grandfather and my father's dreaming.



(Singing)

NARRATOR: Recording our culture is a primary aim.

ERGLIS: The cataloguing is really important, it's a record of all the work done here and it means that purchasers know that we have a database here, that it's maintained. And the staff do all that.

NARRATOR: Because of this the Warnayaka Arts Centre is now a solid business model providing a steady source of income for artists.

ERGLIS: When we sell artwork the greater portion actually goes to the artist and they pay us a commission. We use that for wages, paints, for running the business. The majority of their portion they use to support their families.

NARRATOR: It's a local initiative based on a simple philosophy.

JIGILI: Don't be shy just continue improving so you will become a more prouder person in your community.



CURRICULUM LINKS

Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla has strong connections to the first phase of the Australian Curriculum through History and the Arts.

History

Year K – 10 Content Description

Knowledge and Understanding

- First Australians
- The diversity of cultures, beliefs

Languages and social organisation

- Early contacts

Skills

- Historical questions and research
- Analysis and use of sources
- Perspectives and interpretations
- Comprehension and communication

The Arts

Yulyurlu can be used as a starting point to develop investigative themes on:

- How art reflects values, beliefs and traditions
- The role of artists in different societies
- Design considerations and constraints
- Aesthetics
- Relationships to the land as expressed by Indigenous culture
- Media, materials and technologies
- Continuity and change
- Society and culture
- Social dimensions of art
- Natural science, botany and ethno-botany



PROTOCOLS

Indigenous Knowledge and Protocols

Protocols are the standards of behaviour that people use to show respect to each other. Every culture has different ways of communicating, and in order to work with someone from a different background or culture in a respectful way then you need to understand how people might see, value or express things differently.

This page includes links and reviews of protocol guides developed by a range of organisations to help people understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (or Indigenous) protocols and to work with Indigenous people in a way that is culturally respectful.

Principles and Protocols

1. Respect

The rights of Indigenous people to own and control their heritage, including Indigenous images, designs, stories and other cultural expressions, should be respected.

2. Indigenous control

Indigenous people have the right to self-determination in their cultural affairs and the expression of their cultural material. There are many ways in which this right can be respected in the creation, production and exhibition of art.

One significant way is to discuss how Indigenous control over a project will be exercised. This raises the issue of who can represent language groups and who can give clearances of traditionally and collectively owned material.

3. Communication, consultation and consent

Communication and consultation are important in Indigenous visual arts projects. Consent is necessary for the reproduction of Indigenous visual arts, and if traditional communal designs are included, consent may be required from traditional owners. Communication is most effective if each group:

- is aware of the way in which their own culture affects how they see an issue
- endeavours to understand and build awareness of the other culture
- patiently unravels misunderstandings which arise out of cultural differences
- finds the right people within a community to consult.

4. Interpretation, integrity and authenticity

Indigenous artists and their communities should have control over how their cultural heritage is presented. The presentation of a work includes its interpretation, integrity and authenticity.



5. Secrecy and confidentiality

Some Indigenous cultural material is not suitable for wide dissemination on the grounds of secrecy and confidentiality. Those putting together arts projects must first discuss any restrictions on use with the relevant Indigenous groups

6. Attribution and copyright

Relevant Indigenous language groups or communities should be attributed for the use of their cultural heritage material in artworks. In many instances in the past, and even today, Indigenous people have been used as informants for research, evaluations and theses.

Today, Indigenous people are seeking greater acknowledgment than being recognised as mere informants. They seek the right to be acknowledged as owners of this knowledge and information. They also seek to have a greater share in any benefits generated from the use of their cultural stories.

Copyright is a form of legal protection that provides the creator or author of a work with the right to use or capitalise on the work and prevent others from using it without his or her permission.

7. Proper returns and royalties

Indigenous people should share in the benefits and receive proper returns and royalties for the use of their cultural heritage material.

8. Continuing cultures

Consultation is an ongoing process. Cultures are dynamic and evolving, and the protocols within each group and community will also change. It is important to consider how you will maintain relationships for future consultations.

This might include consultation, at a later date, for further uses of the work that were not initially envisaged.

http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/32368/Visual_arts_protocol_guide.pdf

<http://reconciliation.org.au/nsw/education-kit/protocols/>

RESOURCES

YouTube

Juka Juka Emu Dreaming

Curtis Jampijinpa Fry of Yuendumu shares a story about his Emu country. Warlpiri sand drawings have been animated using stop motion by Jason Japaljarri Woods to illustrate this Jukurrpa.

http://www.animation.pawmedia.com.au/?page_id=62

Lajamanu and the Law

Each year around December and January the Lajamanu Warlpiri community hold an important Men's Initiation Ceremony for the young men. It is called the Kurdiji and lasts for several weeks. It is a rite of passage where boys become men in accordance with Warlpiri Law. This year the ceremony was interrupted when a women entered a restricted ceremony area. A place where women and children are forbidden under Warlpiri Law. Here some of the Warlpiri leaders and elders talk about what happened and how it has affected the community.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU4m3bRyRqU&feature=related>

Manyu Wana

A Warlpiri Australian Aboriginal children's show made in Yuendumu Northern Territory for the bilingual program of Yuendumu School and other Warlpiri schools, Nyirripi, Willowra and Lajamanu School.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2POYIhEPXY>

Ngurra-kurlu – The five pillars of Warlpiri Life

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=AU&hl=en-GB&v=iFZq7AduGrc>

Sesame Street for Warlpiri with Liam Jarrah-Manyu Wana #10

A Warlpiri Australian Aboriginal children's show made in Yuendumu Northern Territory for the bilingual program of Yuendumu School and other Warlpiri schools, - Featuring Liam Jarrah on guitar.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWA9tPNjadw&feature=related>

Walpiri counting From The Story of one

A look at the Walpiri and how they make do without counting.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asM39tfbIMQ&feature=related>



Websites

The Place

Lajamanu region - The edge of the Tanami – Images of Lajamanu

<http://ozoutback.com.au/Australia/lajamanu/index.html>

Tradition and Transformation, National Gallery of Victoria

<http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ngvschools/TraditionAndTransformation/>

Lajamanu keeps culture alive and builds business

<http://www.indigenous.gov.au/index.php/stories/video03/>

Lajamanu Community Health Centre

<http://www.kwhb.com.au/23-lajamanu-community-health-centre.html>

Working Future – Northern Territory Government

<http://www.workingfuture.nt.gov.au/Territory%20Growth%20Towns/Lajamanu/Lajamanu.html>

The People

The Warlpiri Education and Training Trust

http://www.clc.org.au/building_the_bush/wett.html

TV, radio and music recordings from the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu

<http://www.pawmedia.com.au/home>

Visit Home and the Warlpiri People - Audio Interview with Aboriginal Artist Malcolm Jagamara

<http://www.aboriginalartstore.com.au/aboriginal-art-culture/home-and-the-warlpiri-people-a.php>

The Jukurrpa

Yiwarra Kuju, The Canning Stock Route, National Museum of Australia

http://www.nma.gov.au/education/school_resources/temporary_exhibitions/yiwarra_kuju/

Art Centres

Mimi Aboriginal Art and Craft

<http://mimiarts.com/>

Warnayaka Art Centre

<http://warnayaka.com/>

Lajamanu keeps culture alive and builds business. Interview with the artists

<http://www.indigenous.gov.au/index.php/stories/video03/>



Protocols

NSW Board of Studies – Working with Aboriginal Communities

<http://ab-ed.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/files/working-with-aboriginal-communities.pdf>

Australia Council for the Arts

Protocols for producing Indigenous Australian visual arts

http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/32368/Visual_arts_protocol_guide.pdf

Books

Glowczewski, Barbara, *Yapa: Peintres Aborigènes de Balgo et Lajamanu*, Lebon Gallery, Paris, 1991.

Johnson, Vivien, *Aboriginal Artists of the Western Desert: A Biographical Dictionary*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1994.

Napaljarri, Peggy Rockman, and Cataldi, Lee, *Yimi-kirli:*

Warlpiri Dreaming and Histories, Harper Collins Publishers, U.S.A and England, 1994.

Ryan, Judith, *Paint Up Big: Warlpiri Women's Art of Lajamanu*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1990.

West, Margie, ed, *Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla*, Exhibition catalogue, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2011.