

EVERYWHEN ART ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Tiger Palpatja



c 1920 -16/4/2012

Place of Birth: Piltati Rockhole (near Nyapari)

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Tiger Palpatja was born at Piltati rock hole, the sacred place of the Two Serpent Men in the far northwest of South Australia in the 1920s. He lived a traditional nomadic life before moving to the mission at Ernabella where he married Nyalapanytja and worked as a shearer and fencer.

In the 1970s Tiger and his family moved to Amata closer to his homeland. He was a Ngangkari (traditional healer), a senior Law man and was a senior custodian for the Wanampi Tjukurpa the creation story for country around Piltati near Nyapari community,

He had the custodial rights and responsibilities for country around the Mann Ranges including Wati Ngintaka Tjukurpa and the Wanampi Kutjara Tjukurpa - both ancestral stories of epic proportions relating to the formation of the land and rock holes in the region

He also became a respected punu (wood) carver and started painting in September 2004 in his early 80s. His work was soon recognised by the wider art world in which he developed a reputation as an outstanding artist and a great colourist. Tiger was a finalist in the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award in 2005, 2006, 2010 and 2011 and a finalist in the Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards in 2009 and 2011.

He moved back to his homeland at Nyapari community in 2009 after living at Amata for many years and began to work with the art centre Tjungu Palya - his work represented jointly by Tjala Arts at Amata and Tjungu Palya at Nyapari.

"The painterley heritage of Kunmanara Palpatja: A Tribute"

Susan McCulloch & Emily McCulloch Childs, written on request from Tjala Arts to be read at Kunmunara's tribute ceremony on his lands in May 2012.

A respected carver of punu for many decades, since Kunmanara began painting in 2004 at the age of around 83 his distinctive canvases were hailed as amongst the greats of contemporary Australian painting. Notable for luscious colour and looseness of design, characteristically Kunmanara's works feature soft pinks, reds and yellows. These contrast with deeper colours such as rich midnight blues and black. White was used often as highlighting colour, working with the base colour to create dotted stipples that play across the canvas, while hints of deep red, greens, magenta and blues provide depth and outline.

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Kunmanara's main painting theme was that of the ancient Wanampi story of the mythical water or rainbow snake that formed the country of his birthplace near the Piltati rockhole. Sometimes he also told a simpler story (especially in earlier paintings) - that of bush food. Perhaps in these Mai Tjuta (Plenty Food) works he was recalling a time of plenty, before the devastation to the Australian environment by farming, mining, and introduced species such as feral cats and camels that have impacted so greatly on the native wildlife and flora.

In their bold painterly quality and seemingly free design Kunmanara's paintings may appear as figurative abstracts. And so, at one level and in the western context, they are. Yet inherent in each work, underlying the layers of glowing colour and curvilinear shapes, are the ancient stories, recorded in these works as they had been by Kunmanara's ancestors for tens of thousands of years in designs incised on rock faces and sacred men's objects.

It is this extraordinary melding of ancient knowledge and contemporary medium, handled with such a joyous confidence, that gives Kunmanara's paintings both a strong visual aesthetic and a powerful cultural integrity.

These glorious late artistic outpourings of a long, productive and creative life have become woven into the cultural fabric of this country. They will ensure that Kunmanara's heritage will live on to inform and inspire future generations. "

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Palpatja's paintings were exhibited widely and regularly in leading private and public galleries in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Canberra, Darwin, Broome, Alice Springs, Perth, Fremantle, Singapore and Germany from 2005 to 2011 and have since been included in several important survey exhibitions of art from his region.

Tiger Palpatja's work is held in the National Gallery of Victoria, the National Gallery of Australia, the Australian National University, Flinders University Art Museum, the Australian National University, Charles Darwin University, the Art Gallery of NSW and the Art Gallery of South Australia.

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SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2008 'Wanampi Tjukurpa' Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2006 Tiger Palpatja: Snake Dreamings From The Desert, Birrung Gallery, Sydney, NSW

GROUP EXHIBITION

2011 'Tjungu Palya 2011', Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
2011 'Western APY Lands', ArtKelch, Freiburg, Germany
2011 'Tjungu Palya - Masterpieces', Chapman Gallery, Canberra, ACT
2011 'Ngura Tjukuritja - A Dreaming Place, Marshall Arts, Adelaide, SA
2011 'Intangibles in Terra Australis', Flinders University City Gallery, State Library of SA, Adelaide, SA
2011 'Green', Outstation Gallery, Darwin, NT
2010 'Tjukurpa', Outstation Gallery, Darwin, NT
2010 'Senior Artists - Important New Works', Randell Lane Fine Arts, Perth, WA
2010 'Tjungu Palya Survey Show' Short St. Gallery, Broome, WA
2010 'Unsung Heroes' Australian High Commission, Singapore
2010 'Raft Launch' Raft Artspace, Alice Springs, NT
2010 'Intangibles in Terra Australis' Sala kubo-kutxa in association with Marshall Arts, San Sebastian, Spain.
2010 'Tjukurpa Pulkatjara: The Power of Law' South Australian Museum, Adelaide, SA
2010 'Partnerships' Marshall Arts, Adelaide, SA
2010 'Senior Artists- Important new Works' Randell Lane Fine Arts, Perth, WA
2009 '26th NATSIAA', Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin, NT
2009 'Anangu Backyard' Adelaide festival Centre, Adelaide, SA
2009 'Tjala Arts Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2009 'tjala Arts' Aboriginal & Pacific Art, Sydney, NSW
2009 'Tjala Arts, Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 'Our Mob' Tjala Arts, Adelaide Festival Centre, SA
2009 'Making Tracks- A Glimpse at two decades of Aboriginal Art in South Australia' Tandanya, Adelaide, SA
2009 'New Work Tjala Arts' Chapman Gallery, Canberra, ACT
2009 'Master Stroke' Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 Indigenous Art & Law & Healing University Club, UWA, Crawley WA
2009 Desert Mob Tjala Arts. Araluen Alice Springs, NT
2008 Tjukurpa nganampa kunpu kanyintjaku - Stories that keep culture strong' Tjala Arts, Aboriginal & Pacific Art Sydney, NSW
2008 Tjungu Palyaku Warka Nyuwana' ReDot Gallery, Singapore
2008 Tjala Arts Men Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2008 New Work- Tjala Arts Randell Lane Fine Art Perth, WA
2007 'Desert Masterclass' South Australian Museum (Marshall Arts) Adelaide, SA
2007 Nyangatja nganampa tjukurpa: These are our stories, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, Vic
2006 Tjala Arts: SALA Festival, Art Images, Adelaide, SA
2006 Tjala Arts, Kluge-Ruhe, University of Virginia, USA
2006 Utulu kuwaritja amatala nguru: New mob from Amata, Red Dot Gallery, Singapore
2005 Waku Kunpu: Strong Work, Bandigan Art, Sydney, NSW
2005 Amata watiku tjukurpa wiru: Good stories from Amata men, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
2005 Minymaku Arts: SALA Festival Art Images, Adelaide, SA
2005 Minymaku Arts: Emerging artists from Amata South Australia' Indigenart, Fremantle, WA

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