

MESSUMS WILTSHIRE

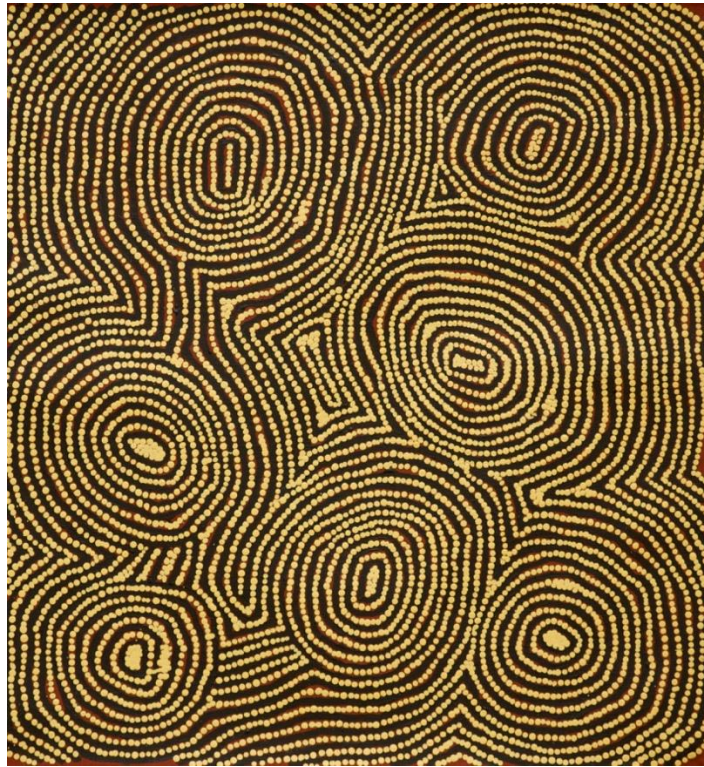
ART DESIGN PERFORMANCE EDUCATION

PAPUNYA TULA ARTISTS

**Charlie Tjapangati, Clara Napurrula, Florie Watson
Napangati, Leonie Kamutu Napaltjarri, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Turkey
Tolson Tjupurrula & Willy Tjungurrayi**

PAINTINGS AND WOODBLOCKS FROM THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DESERT

7 December 2019 – 5 January 2020
Messums Wiltshire, Long Gallery



Indigenous Australian people have lived in the remote deserts of Australia for tens of thousands of years. In the late 1960s, the Australian government moved several communities from the Western Desert region - primarily Pintupi, Luritja, Warlpiri and Arremte peoples - to the Papunya settlement, which is located about 150 miles south of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. Whilst a tradition of body and sand painting was prevalent - historically passing from generation to generation, down each distinct family line and depicted old stories, sacred imagery and transcendental visual codes - it was not until the first years of the 1970s that members of the community began to paint on to canvas in acrylic. In 1972 the Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd was officially founded as an artist cooperative, owned and operated by members of the community. The group's work, often referred to simplistically as 'dot painting', has since been shown on almost every continent in the world with Papunya Tula Artists' works in the collections of major public institutions globally.

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This body of unique works – never previously shown outside of Australia - features paintings and woodcuts by some of the leading artists of the group today, which includes several women, attesting to the increasingly prominent role of female artists within the group. Particular to this exhibition is a significant body of woodcarvings, to which technique the group was introduced in the 1990s by Chris Hodges (Director of Utopia Gallery, Sydney and representative of the PTA group). These works in particular speak of a direct link between the carving and scratching of trees, bark and wood in the landscape and the mark-making employed in creating the artworks. They also come from a period of time when the group was arguably less consciously aware of the increasing enthusiasm for decorative aboriginal work, nevertheless significant examples are held in the collection of the British Museum.

This exhibition at Messums Wiltshire represents a rare opportunity to see a body of works from the PTA group outside of Australia – pieces that speak to ancient traditions carried through time, representing both temporality and permanence, representation and experience and includes the work of the following artists:

Charlie Tjapangati was born at the site of Tjulurrunya, west of Kiwirrkura in approximately 1949. He is the younger brother of Nanyuma Napangati, who also paints for Papunya Tula Artists. During the early 1960s Charlie travelled into Papunya by truck with one of Jeremy Long's government patrols. He was a young teenager at the time and was initiated in Papunya after arriving. Charlie commenced painting for Papunya Tula Artists in 1978, and in 1999 he contributed to the Kintore mens' painting as part of the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal. He lives and works in Kiwirrkura in Western Australia.

Clara Napurrula is in her mid to late fifties and lives at Kintore. Her sisters Rubilee and Aileen also paint for the company. Her mother is Wintja Napaltjarri.

Florie Watson Napangati was born in the area around Mt Doreen, north west of the Yuendumu community circa 1950. Shortly after she was born her father passed away and her family walked to Mt Doreen Station. Later she moved to Yuendumu where she lived until her first husband passed away. She later remarried Jimmy Brown Tjampitjinpa and now resides in Kiwirrkura. Florie began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in 2007.

Leonie Kamutu Napaltjarri was born in the bush at Ikunytji (Haasts Bluff) in 1948. Her mother was Malyungka Nangala and her father was Kamutu Tjungarrayai. Her mother said she was from Tjukurla in WA. Leonie is the younger sister of Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra's first wife, Susette. Leonie sees herself as the 'younger auntie' of Long Jack's eldest daughter Charlotte Phillipus. Leonie attended school at Papunya. Her first husband was Dalton Abbott Ngala Bangarta, with whom she had two daughters. She had seven children with her second husband Kenny Lillius (b. 1951) of whom Kayleen Lillius is the eldest. Kenny was the brother of Kiwirrkura Chairman Jimmy Brown. Leonie says she is now on her own. She has many grandchildren, some of them married with children of their own. Her father's brother was Tjungarrayi Kingsley, who was one of the first painters at Papunya in 1971, who taught Leonie and her sister to paint.

Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was born around 1943 at Tjiturrunya, about 100km west of the Kintore ranges in Western Australia. Following an extended drought in the 1950s, Ronnie's family moved to Haasts Bluff and then on to Papunya where he grew up. Whilst in Papunya, Ronnie started painting in the early 1970s. He was among the first of the Pintupi men to embrace art as a means of recording culture and thus took part at the genesis of the western desert art movement. He appeared in his first exhibition in 1974 and had his first solo show in 1989. He moved to Kintore in the 1980s, shortly after its establishment, fulfilling his dream

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of returning to his homelands. Ronnie Tjampitjinpa was the winner of the 1988 Alice Springs Art Prize and has been a finalist in numerous prestigious art prizes in the intervening 30 or so years. He is regarded as one of Aboriginal art's most collectable artists, appearing in over 30 major collections worldwide. Ronnie is married to Mary Brown Napangardi and continues to reside in the small Pintupi community of Kintore, deep into a remote desert area, about 500km west of Alice Springs.

Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula was born near Haasts Bluff in approximately 1940. Early in his life he worked as a cattleman around Haasts Bluff, Papunya and Mt. Liebig. He painted for Papunya Tula Artists from 1971 through to his death in Alice Springs in August 2001. In 1999 Turkey contributed to the Kintore mens' painting as part of the Western Desert Dialysis Appeal.

Willy Tjungurrayi was born at Patjantja to the south west of Lake MacDonal, circa 1930. He is the second of three brothers, one of which was Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi. Willy was living on the western side of Lake MacDonal prior to walking into Papunya with a large group. His first contact with Europeans was with one of Jeremy Long's welfare patrols near Lake MacDonal. Willy first exhibited his paintings in group shows in the early 1980s, and has had two solo exhibitions, both in Melbourne. His work is included in many public and corporate collections, such as the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artbank and the Aboriginal Art Museum, The Netherlands. He died in 2018.

Notes to editors:

Messums Wiltshire is leading multi-purpose gallery and arts centre, set inside a restored thirteenth-century tithe barn and surrounding buildings with exhibition space, sculpture garden and restaurant. Messums London is a refurbished 1950's gallery on Cork Street where the family have had a gallery presence since 1992. Messums offers artists and collectors a unique environment to experience and engage with creative endeavour across multiple artforms.

Exhibitions across the year complete and compliment a programme of events including screenings, talks, suppers and festivals at both our London and Wiltshire venues. Notable events to date include: Solo responses to the barn by Christopher Kurtz, Judy Pfaff, Michael Hulls and Bruce Munro; pioneering contemporary dance performances from The Russell Maliphant Company, Alexander Whitley Dance Company and MOVEMENT by Young Sadler's Wells Associate Choreographers; *Textile in Motion* with fashion collections by Henrik Vibskov, Joshua Millard and Sadie Williams as well as festivals celebrating Clay, Wood, Glass and Textile with contributions from some of the greatest makers and minds in each field.

A comprehensive list of past and future exhibitions can be found on our website.

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For images, information and press enquiries email: press@messumswiltshire.com