

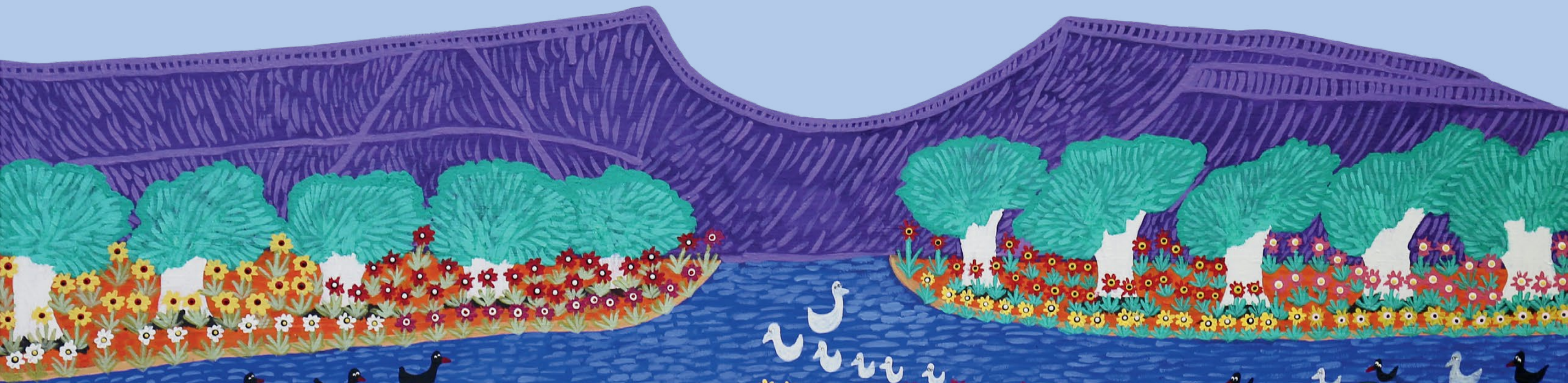


Artback NT

TRUE STORY

of life, with love
from Central Australia

PROSPECTUS



EXHIBITION OUTLINE

Artback NT invites you to experience the rich, diverse stories, compelling rhythms, and vibrant energy of regional and remote Northern Territory. We proudly champion and support the artists and communities of our region, fostering creativity, cultural expression, and connection. Through our Visual Arts Program, we collaborate with Northern Territory artists, curators, organisations, and communities to co-create and tour exhibitions across remote, regional, and metropolitan galleries, sharing high-quality visual arts experiences with audiences across Australia.

True Story is a dynamic collection of figurative works curated by six prominent art centres from Central Australia. This exhibition tells the shared moments, memories, joys, and struggles of desert life through the eyes of First Nations artists living across the region. Audiences will be drawn into the heart of Australia's iconic desert landscape—a place both captivating and mysterious in the popular imagination, yet fundamental to the national identity.

True Story invites you to step into the lived experiences of life on Country, in town camps, and remote communities. The exhibition reflects the compelling storytelling style of diverse communities of artists, who share their everyday experiences, childhood memories, dreams, and the realities of life in remote Australia. These stories speak to the ongoing care for Country, the challenges of remote travel, and the ongoing fight for recognition and human rights. Thank you for joining us in this celebration of art, culture, and shared histories.

ART CENTRES & ARTWORK

BINDI MWERRE ANTHURRE ARTISTS

Charles Jangala Inkamala, Adrian Jangala Robertson, Billy Tjampitjinpa Kenda

Established in 2000, Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Artists studio provides a unique platform for First Nations artists with disabilities to develop their practices and gain recognition. Drawing from their Central Desert region heritage, the artists explore themes of connection to land, memory, and cultural identity. Their work blends vibrant depictions of landscapes, family, and community with contemporary interpretations of modern life and their ongoing relationship to Country.



HERMANNSBURG POTTERS

**Rona Panangka Rubuntja, Hayley Panangka Coulthard, Abel Pareroutja,
Beth Mbitjana Inkamala, Dalissa Brown**

Hermannsburg Potters are based in Ntaria, a community 130 kilometres west of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), on the banks of the world's oldest riverbed, Larapinta, the Finke River. Hermannsburg Potters developed from an initial six-month training program in 1990 and has evolved into an internationally renowned pottery studio. The artists here bring the vibrant landscape and spirit of Central Australia to life with their hand-crafted terracotta and underglaze pots and figures. Taking inspiration from Country, culture, history, and day-to-day life activities, the Potters depict stories of the river, birds, animals, bush foods, family, mission days, and current life in Ntaria.



ILTJA NTJARRA / MANY HANDS ART CENTRE

Mona Lisa Clements, Dellina Inkamala, Kathy Inkamala

Iltja Ntjarra Artists is a not-for-profit Art Centre based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Aboriginal owned and directed, the centre has a special focus on supporting the 'Hermannsburg School' style watercolour artists who continue to paint in the tradition of their grandfather and relative, Albert Namatjira, arguably one of Australia's most famous artists of the 20th century. The Art Centre started operating in 2004 to provide a place for Western Aranda artists to come together to paint, share and learn new techniques and ideas. The artists work on national and international exhibitions. The centre is renowned for its scenic watercolour paintings on paper as well as its innovative projects, including textiles, and ceramics.



TANGENTYERE ARTISTS

**Marjorie 'Nunga' Williams, Coralie Williams, Nora Abbott,
Sally M Nangala Mulda, Betty Conway**

Established in 2005, Tangentyere Artists is a not-for-profit enterprise and a hub for art activities that supports around 400 artists across the 18 town camps of Mparntwe. Through art, Town Camp Artists communicate stories about family, identity, and everyday life experiences of Aboriginal people in Central Australia. When sharing these stories, the artists place themselves in the national conversation, working towards understanding and reconciliation. Tangentyere is an Arrernte word meaning coming together, working together.



TJANPI DESERT WEAVERS

**Rosalind Yibardi, Kathryn Queama, Christobell Protty, Kirsten Kulitja,
Carolyn Kenta, Margaret Smith, Julie Anderson, Tjunkaya Tapaya,
Lynette Lewis, Yvonne (Stacia) Lewis, Imuna Kenta, Carolyn Kenta**

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is a social enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPY Women's Council) that enables women living in the remote Central and Western Desert regions to earn an income from fibre art. Tjanpi represents over 400 Aboriginal women artists from 26 remote communities across Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory. Tjanpi artists use native grasses to create spectacular contemporary fibre art in the form of baskets and sculptures, displaying a seemingly endless creativity and inventiveness.



YARRENYTY ALTERE ARTISTS

Beth Ebatarinja, Rhonda Sharpe, Marlene Rubuntja

Yarrenyty Arltere Artists is a small, dynamic Art Centre located in the Yarrenyty Arltere Town Camp of the Larrapinta Valley in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), and part of Tangentyere Council, Aboriginal Corporation. Yarrenyty Arltere Artists are recognised for their delightful award-winning soft sculptures, made from bush-dyed woollen blankets embellished and stitched with wool and cotton. The artists also work in textiles, works on paper, fashion and film making.



PLACE

Immerse yourself in a rich collection of narratives that highlight our profound connections to the land, families, and environments that shape us. These stories resonate with emotions tied to the struggle for housing rights, demonstrating families' deep desire for security and a sense of belonging. Memories of home intertwine with our longing for familiar sights and sounds, underscoring the importance of being rooted in a place for cultural heritage and community strength.

Adrian Jangala Robertson, son of the late Eunice Napangardi, depicts his mother's land, Yalpirakinu, capturing the stunning beauty of the desert's mountains and trees. His choice of colours breathes life into the landscape, with each brushstroke reflecting his deep connection to this sacred territory.

Billy Tjampitjinpa Kenda's artwork pays tribute to his heritage and is inspired by fond childhood memories of camping in the outback. His connection to Jay Creek in the West MacDonnell Ranges shines through as he expresses the spirit of the Central Desert, reflecting a family tradition of painting.

Charles Jangala Inkamala conveys his relationship with Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and its surroundings through intricate line work and textured brushstrokes. His art integrates aerial and ground perspectives, showcasing a vibrant sky against the iconic red earth.

Beth Mbitjana Inkamala's narrative highlights her strong emotional bond to her land, capturing cherished family memories and traditions while acknowledging the pain of disconnection caused by external pressures. Her story emphasizes the necessity of honouring one's heritage while navigating modern life.



GATHERING

The stories collectively celebrate the theme of gathering, emphasising the profound connections and communal bonds that arise from shared experiences. Kathy Inkamala's *Homeless in Homeland* portrays a family gathered around a fire, embodying resilience and strength in the face of hardship. In a similar vein, Betty Conway's *Family Picnic at Illari Spring* captures the joyful rhythm of family outings, where food and shared labour foster unity and tradition amidst the natural beauty of Tempe Downs.

Coralie Williams's *Ration Days* serves as a reminder of the impact colonialism has had on the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples. This has led to increased rates of diet-related health issues that persist in many communities today. The communal act of gathering for food was replaced by a more transactional distribution of rations, which disconnected individuals from their land and the cultural practices tied to food sourcing. The painting recalls the days when the mission workers would hand out food and supplies—flour, tea leaves, sugar, salt, and homegrown vegetables—on Saturdays when people would gather.

In Marjorie 'Nunga' Williams's *Ntaria Grand Final*, the excitement of a football match provides a vibrant backdrop for communal celebration, illustrating how sports can unite diverse individuals in shared joy and competition.

Finally, Sally M. Nangala Mulda's *Two Stories* reveals the intimate moments of storytelling by the fire, showcasing how simple gatherings can strengthen familial and community ties through laughter and conversation. Together, these narratives underscore the rich tapestry of connection, resilience, and support that defines the essence of community life.



FAMILY & FRIENDS

The narratives beautifully illustrate the profound bonds between family and animals, celebrating themes of love, support, and shared legacies. Adrian Jangala Robertson's artwork draws from memory of his mother's ancestral land in Family in Yalpirakinu, showcasing the rich landscapes and memories tied to his family. Kathy Inkamala's piece captures the struggles faced by the legendary Albert Namatjira, emphasising his family's challenges even as he gained national recognition, revealing the pressures they experienced despite his success.

In Cynthia, My Mother, Marlene Rubuntja honours her hardworking mother, capturing her beauty and dedication through her role as a cleaner and recognizing the impact of maternal strength. Marlene's tribute, Wenton, My Father, pays homage to her father, Wenton Rubuntja, an activist, artist and Butcher whose efforts and love shaped their family's life

Rhonda Sharpe's soft sculpture, Cat, poignantly depicts the comfort her cat provided during her battle with cancer, highlighting the healing power of animal companionship.

Lastly, Camel Kamula Nyakali by Rhonda Sharpe tells the whimsical story of a young girl and her camel, which serves as her companion in a romantic pursuit, highlighting loyalty and adventure in the realm of love. These stories collectively celebrate the warmth of family relationships and the crucial role animals play in our lives, nurturing and guiding us through various journeys.

Overall, these narratives beautifully illustrate how love, loyalty, and companionship—from both family and animals—provide us with comfort, strength, and a lasting sense of identity throughout the years.



KAITIAKI MARAMA
NAKURU GAP ANCESTRAL
(2022)
Watercolour on paper
Courtesy of Alice Whelan Artists

In 2022, Kaitiaki Marama visited the site of the Nakuru Gap Ancestral, a significant site in the history of the Māori people. During the visit, Kaitiaki Marama, along with his family, found a small stone structure, which he found to be a small house. The painting captures the essence of the site, showing the landscape and the small structure. The painting is a watercolour on paper, and it is signed 'Kaitiaki Marama' in the bottom right corner.



MEMORIES

Memories create a rich tapestry of our lives, capturing the essence of friendship, shared experiences, and the bittersweet nature of loss. These narratives capture moments of laughter and adventure, showcasing how our connections shape our identities. The stories of the Anangu community, such as the heartwarming tale of Tangki (donkeys) as companions, illustrate a unique bond enriched by storytelling and art. Alongside these joyful memories, however, are threads of grief that remind us of our losses.

Abel Pareroultja's reflection on a childhood wall symbolizes not only the happy moments shared with friends but also honours those who have passed away. His tribute demonstrates how grief intertwines with cherished memories, creating a complex emotional landscape. Dalissa Brown and Hayley Panangka Coulthard further capture this duality, recounting playful adventures that are tinged with the sadness of losing loved ones. Hayley's sculpture, which includes a tribute to her late best friend, Vera, serves as a reminder of the friendships that shaped her youth, highlighting the heartache of absence.

Mona Lisa Clements' narrative, centred on fishing and painting near Yaparipa (Glen Helen), reflects her family's connection to the land and waterways while addressing the pain of inadequate housing—an echo of collective grief in the face of unmet needs.

Together, these stories celebrate joyful moments while honouring the sadness of loss. They illustrate that while grief may overshadow our memories, it is through these experiences that we find solace and strength, deepening our appreciation for the enduring bonds of friendship.



TRAVEL

The narratives from Central Australia offer a captivating exploration of travel, intertwining historical and contemporary experiences that emphasize the deep connection between people and their land. In Beth Mbitjana Inkamala's piece *Camel*, she reminisces about significant journeys taken with her family, relying on camels and donkeys for transport. These adventures evoke a sense of nostalgia, highlighting the joy of familial bonds, the thrill of exploration, and the intimate relationship shared with the landscapes along ancient routes.

The Tjanpi Desert Weavers present a collective story celebrating the Bush Bus, a vital lifeline for the Anangu community since its introduction in 1998. They illustrate how this bus fosters connectivity, allowing family members to visit one another across vast distances while also granting access to essential services in Mparntwe. This narrative highlights the freedom and opportunities that travel brings to remote communities.

Mona Lisa Clements' reflections on Palm Valley reveal a contrasting past where travel was laborious and time-consuming, underscoring the changes brought about by modern transportation. Palm Valley is a place steeped in ancient history with its Cabbage Palms dating back over 15000 years with the nearest relatives 1000s of kilometres away,

it's a unique landscape that draws travellers despite its remoteness. Her artwork captures this evolution, depicting the stunning landscape while illustrating the dramatic shifts it has undergone over the years.

Nora Abbott's *Lasseter Story* delves into a significant moment in Anangu history, recounting the interaction between the Anangu people and the gold seeker Lasseter. This story highlights themes of hospitality and kinship, showcasing the Anangu's willingness to care for a stranger who appeared lost, thereby enriching our understanding of their generous nature and profound connection to the land.

Lastly, Billy Tjampitjinpa Kenda's artwork of Jay Creek blends modern elements with traditional imagery, creating a vibrant portrayal of his mother's country. The composition captures the dynamic interplay between past and present, with planes and animals coexisting harmoniously in the landscape.

Together, these stories form a rich tapestry that illustrates how travel and exploration not only reflect physical movement across the land but also possess enduring cultural significance that shapes identities and relationships within the Central Australian desert.



PUBLIC PROGRAMS

details tbc pending funding.

We are excited to provide you with our Sensory Public Program, designed to enhance your experience of the artworks featured in this exhibition. This guided program is intended to make the artwork more accessible and engaging for all visitors, regardless of ability. Each kit contains a range of sensory tools and support materials that help you interact with the artwork using your senses of touch, hearing, sight, and smell. Inside, you'll find various items tailored to enhance your experience—objects, textures and scents that deepen your connection with the pieces.

Each activity invites participants to connect with the stories connected to the artworks through touch, creativity, and reflection. This program is designed for ages 8 and up, offering a hands-on journey into the heart of the community's heritage. Each story is paired with an interactive object and an engaging activity that connects participants with the themes of each narrative, such as companionship, family, childhood play, nature, and memories.

Photography credit Sara Maiorino.



**PRODUCER/
PROJECT INFORMATION**

History and credentials

This project is a collaborative effort between the producer, Artback NT, and the Art Centres representing the artists: Bindi Mwerre Anthurre Artists, Hermannsburg Potters, Iltja Ntjarra / Many Hands Art centre, Tangentyere Artists, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, and Yarrenyty Altere Artists.

Significance

Desert life and stories of community and place.

Audience Relevance

This exhibition brings together approximately thirty art works. Comprising paintings and framed works on paper including screen prints and pigment prints, the exhibition combines wit and humour with astute commentary. The exhibition is highly accessible to a general audience while providing deeper insights into the cultural, social, and environmental influences on life. It will be of particular interest to those with a fascination for life in central Australia. Although the exhibition reflects life in the desert, it has resonances throughout Australia as storytelling and politics know no borders.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Touring dates: 2026 -2028

Exhibition specs:

- 4 x Terracotta & underglaze pots with sculptural lids
- 1 x Terracotta & underglaze sculpture car
- 1 x sculpture of the Centre Bush Bus
- 10 x sculpture figurative grass works (as a group)
- 5 x figurative soft sculpture works
- 11x paintings
- 5 x works on paper
- AV 2 film works

Running metres: ~60–80

Approx. time needed to install exhibition: ~1–2 days

Approx. time needed to bump out exhibition: ~1–2 days

Exhibition inclusions:

- Education material – integrated public program and education kit
- Furniture – plinths provided
- AV equipment 2 screens provided

Cost: \$5k + GST

CONTACT INFO

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