

PUNA YANIMA & LINDA PUNA

> *WANGKA KUTJARA, TJUKURPA KUTJU*



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DEN NEW  
ART

Linden New Art is delighted to return to Domain House and be working in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to present the exhibition *Wangka Kutjara, Tjukurpa Kutju*.

Echoing the theme of NAIDOC celebrations this year – *Because of her, we can!* this exhibition highlights the importance of women's stories, family connections and the passing of knowledge on from one generation to the next. It is an honour for Linden, that this is first time, that mother and daughter artists' Puna Yanima and Linda Puna, have exhibited their work together. Importantly, we have been able to provide visitors with the opportunity to listen to a recording of these two artists discussing their "tjukurpa" as they painted the works on display.

## INTRODUCTION

Linden New Art is proud that this important contemporary Aboriginal exhibition forms part of the satellite program of the Melbourne Art Fair Foundation's Art Week in August this year.

This exhibition would not be possible without the hard work and support of the following people. Our thanks are extended to:

- > David Hagger, Curator of this exhibition, who has worked in close collaboration with Mimili Maku Arts to present this work in such a dynamic and thoughtful manner
- > Anna Wattler, Arts Center Manager from Mimili Maku Arts, who has liaised closely with the artists and the Linden team to present this exhibition
- > Angus Webb, for recording Puna Yanima and Linda Puna as they made the works for this exhibition at Mimili Maku Arts.
- > N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs, from the Boonwurrung Foundation, for the Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony at the official opening of the exhibition
- > Shaun McMahon & Gwenda Sim, from Yamaha Music Australia, for their in-kind support of audio visual equipment
- > Mark Chapman, from Chapman & Bailey, for their in-kind support of canvas stretching for the exhibition
- > The team at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria – Émer Harrington, Kara Ward and Kasia Gabrys.

This exhibition would not be possible without the support of the City of Port Phillip and Creative Victoria.

Melinda Martin  
Director  
July 2018

COVER IMAGE > Linda Puna, *Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018, acrylic on linen, 122 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects.



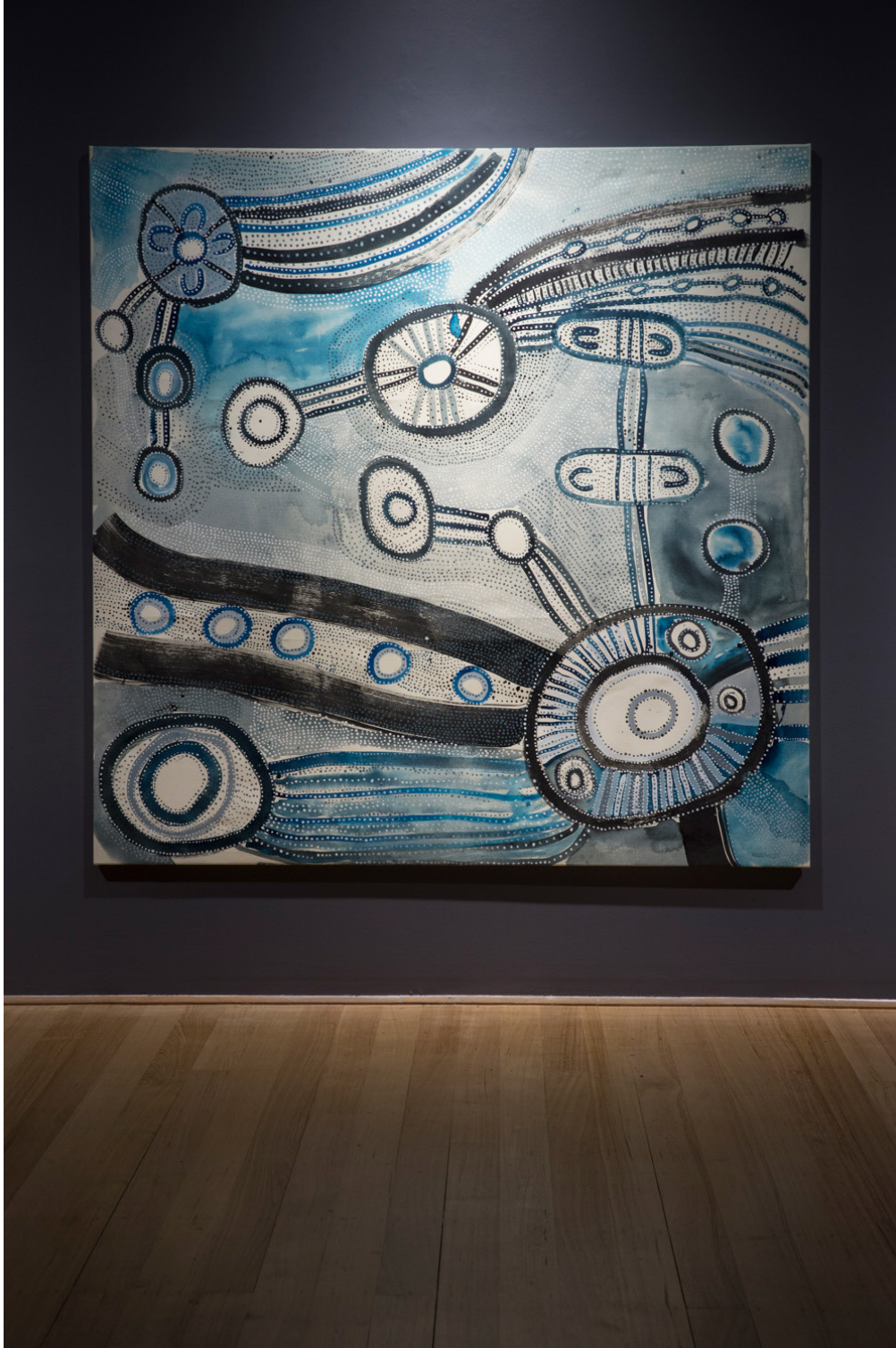


IMAGE > Puna Yanima, *Antara* [installation view], 2018, acrylic and ink on linen, 198 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects. Photograph > Theresa Harrison Photography.

When Puna Yanima was born to parents Norman and Lucy Yanima in the bush at De Rose Hill, a small station in the far north of South Australia 70 kilometres from the township of Mimili, the Stuart Highway was a significantly smaller road than it is today. Now one of Australia's major arteries, the highway is the main access point to the seven art centres that stretch across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, home of some of the nation's most innovative artists under the spotlight of public and private galleries in Australia and abroad.

*"My parents were both Yankunytjatjara and I grew up speaking Yankunytjatjara and living in the old way. We collected bush tucker and camped out every night. Then we moved to Indulkana. There was nothing there; no wali (houses), no shop, no clinic. Only Anangu tjuta. I learned Pitjantjatjara, and I found a wati (man). My wati was from Mimili, so we moved across and my children were born in the bush just outside of Mimili."*<sup>i</sup>

## TWO VOICES

## ONE TJUKURPA

Formerly known as Everard Park, a cattle station that was returned to Aboriginal ownership through the 1981 Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act, the Mimili community is home to

300 Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people who act as custodians of both the land and the tjukurpa (creation stories)<sup>ii</sup>. Their people have been living on this land for millennia. Its art centre, Mimili Maku Arts, is owned and managed by a board of Anangu directors who develop programs that continue to support artists from the Mimili community and the four surrounding homelands of Perentie Bore, Wanmara, Blue Hills and Sandy Bore through teaching and encouraging intergenerational cultural exchange. This, as director Mumu Mike Williams says, "is Anangu way".<sup>iii</sup>

Puna began painting when the art centre was just a little old brick building (now the oldest building in Mimili), barely large enough to house half a dozen artists at any one time. Art centre managers were forced to create a roster for those wishing to use its limited facilities. In 2014, a new art centre was built, providing resources and services to the artists working in community.

Puna has spent the past six months in this new building painting the three major works now installed across the southern wall of Domain House. In them we see Antara, an important women's ceremonial site near Mimili. Puna and fellow senior artists Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, Ngupulya Pumani and Tuppy Goodwin tell the story of the significant maku (witchetty grub) tjukurpa from this site in their works.

*"I was a kungka (woman) when I first visited Antara, when I was first shown and told tjukurpa pulka (many stories). Antara is very important for women around here. My mother Lucy and many other*





IMAGE > Puna Yanima working on her painting *Antara*. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects.





IMAGE > Puna Yanima, *Antara* [installation view], 2018, acrylic on linen, 198 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartproject. Photograph > Theresa Harrison Photography.



*women showed me the maku tjukurpa (witchetty grub story), and we would go out to Antara to have inma (song and dance). Still today we visit Antara. We go with minyma tjuta (many women) collecting maku (witchetty grub) and tjala (honey ant). Tjukurpa pulka munu inma pulka (Lots of stories, singing, dancing and ceremony). This is where we pass on our knowledge, we take tijti ninti (kids that know about the importance of Antara), so they can watch and learn.”*

*“I have always painted Antara because it is important for the women of Mimili. All my sisters know and paint Antara. My painting way has changed, but the importance of Antara has always been at the centre of my work.”*

Puna's shift from acrylic paint to ink in recent years has afforded a certain fluidity in her strokes when marking out the ngura (country) of this sacred place, its kapi tjukula (rock holes), apu (rocks) and murpu (mountains). It led her away from a vibrant palette and into a monochromatic one, from which she has begun introducing singular, additional colours such as the royal blue we see in these works on display. Yet, with the ability to dilute and mix the inks, Puna is able to achieve nuanced variations in tone across the surfaces of these paintings.

Puna's daughter Linda is the first Anangu woman to live in a remote community while being dependent on a motorised wheelchair. Her paintings transition between, and often combine, tjukurpa and figurative depictions of everyday community life.

*“There are so many things now that didn't exist when I was a little girl: water tanks, windmills, wali (houses), toyota (cars). I want people to see what Mimili is like today. When I'm an old woman I can teach this kutjupa (new) way of painting to the young ones.”*

Linda spent her formative years on the homeland around Park Well and Sandy Bore in a small house shared with her grandparents, parents, sisters and cousins. At that time the men were working as stockmen on stations and would be away from the homeland for long periods of time. Through watching and listening to the women make art – carving punu (wooden sculptures) daily – Linda began learning the stories that inform her paintings today.

*“I paint what I see, apu munu puli (rocks and hills), punu (trees), kapi tjukurla (water holes). I also paint maku tjukurpa (witchetty grub stories) from around Antara. This is what I learned from the other women, my aunties, my mother and my grandmother. I learned about these stories watching them make punu and talk about it. That's why I always like to include punu in my paintings. This is the old way for stories to travel.”*





IMAGE > Linda Puna. Photograph > Alex Craig Photographer. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects.



IMAGE > Linda Puna, *Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)* [installation view], 2018, acrylic on linen, 122 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects. Photograph > Theresa Harrison Photographer.





Unlike her mother, Linda's use of colour is bold. In the four works for this exhibition, her largest to date, we see Linda work wet on wet, mixing colour on the canvas rather than on a palette prior to application. Earthen reds and warm yellows that mimic the rocky desert landscape surrounding Mimili meet with soft violets and deep plums. Her motifs are framed by gestural line work and veiled dotting. There is an unquestionable confidence in her brushwork, and with it a pace and vivacity that animates her telling of community through rhythm and delight.



IMAGE > Linda Puna, *Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018, acrylic on linen, 122 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects.



## TO LOOK AND TO LISTEN

In a recent Welcome to Country presented by N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs, an elder of the Boonwurrung nation, visitors of the gallery were asked to reflect upon the achievements of her ancestors' core values of learning, respect, celebration of life and honouring sacred ground, and to do so, as people of different nations, by understanding the history and the heritage of the First Peoples.

In Domain House we see the works of these two women face one another, akin to mother and daughter sitting across a table or around a fire. Importantly, in the centre of the darkened room, we are encouraged to sit and listen to a recording of Puna and Linda converse in Pitjantjatjara language. To understand what is being said is not the critical point here, more so that their conversation welcomes you into the room as a shared space. It provides further opportunity for us to echo Carolyn's sentiments – to learn, respect, celebrate and honour – with our eyes and our ears.

Pertinent then, if we consider the NAIDOC theme for 2018, *Because of her, we can!*<sup>iv</sup>, that we see the strength of a mother and daughter relationship, and more deeply the relationships that they have with their grandmothers, sisters and aunties in community, unfold before us. Not only through the powerful stories seen within these paintings, but through their voices, which enliven our reading of these works and deliver an experience of unparalleled solidarity.

*"I grew up with Puna, and I learned from her and her sisters. When I had to leave to go to school in Adelaide, I missed Mimili a lot: My family, my country. Today, I have my own house. It is right at the bottom of the hills I paint. I share the house with my mother Puna. I love to have visitors and listen to country music, but mostly it's only Puna and me. We go to work at the art centre together."*

Equally as expressive through their language, song and paintings, these two women exhibit their work together in *Wangka Kutjara, Tjukurpa Kutju*<sup>v</sup>, as mother and daughter, for the first time here with Linden New Art. They are two voices sharing one tjukurpa.

David Hagger  
Curator  
July 2018

<sup>i</sup> Artist quotes were derived from an interview conducted by email between the writer and the artists in June 2018.

<sup>ii</sup> The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) cites Tjukurpa as the foundation of Anangu life and society, that it has many complex but complementary meanings and refers to the creation period when ancestral beings created the world as we now know it, and that it also refers to the present and future.

<sup>iii</sup> Supplied by Mimili Maku Arts

<sup>iv</sup> NAIDOC is the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC Week celebrations celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in July each year.

<sup>v</sup> Wangka Kutjara, Tjukurpa Kutju is Pitjantjatjara language for 'Two Voices, One Tjukurpa'



IMAGE > Puna Yanima, *Antara* [installation view], 2018, acrylic on linen, 198 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartproject. Photograph > Theresa Harrison Photography.





IMAGE > Linda Puna, *Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)* [installation view], 2018, acrylic on linen, 122 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects. Photograph > Theresa Harrison Photographer.

**Puna Yanima** was born at De Rose Hill Station, located in the APY Lands, north-west of South Australia. She is a respected senior Anangu woman with a strong connection to country, traditional law and culture. She has a deep knowledge of *inma* (ceremonial music and dance).

Yanima's work has featured in numerous group exhibitions across Australia since 2010, including *Nganampa Manta Lipiwanu* (2017) at Aboriginal & Pacific Art gallery in Sydney, NSW, *Desert Mob* (2017) at Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT and *Mimili Maku - Nganampa Wangka (our voice)* at Gallery

Gabrielle Pizzi in Melbourne, VIC.

Her work can be found in the Art Bank Collection, the

Charles Darwin University Gallery, Darwin collection and in various private collections.

## ARTIST BIOS

**Linda Puna** was born in Mimili, located in the APY Lands, north-west of South Australia. She is daughter of Puna Yanima and is the first Anangu woman to live in a remote community whilst being dependent on a motorised wheelchair.

She began painting at Mimili Maku Arts in 2006. Her work has featured in numerous group exhibitions since 2006, including *Desert Mob* (2016) at Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT, *Wapar - Yankunytjatjara Dreaming* (2012) at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC and *Ngura Puti (Bush Home)* (2012) at Redot Gallery, Singapore.

Her work has been collected by the Araluen Art Centre and the SA Native Title Services.



IMAGE > Photograph of Puna Yanima courtesy of Mimili Maku Arts. [Detail]



IMAGE > Photograph of Linda Puna courtesy of Mimili Maku Arts. [Detail]



## PUNA YANIMA

*Antara*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
198 x 200 cm

*Antara*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
198 x 200 cm

*Antara*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
198 x 200 cm

# LIST OF WORKS

## LINDA PUNA

*Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
198 x 122 cm

*Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
198 x 122 cm

*Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
152 x 122 cm

*Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018  
Acrylic on linen,  
152 x 122 cm

The soundscape that accompanies this exhibition was recorded by Angus Webb at Mimili Maku Arts in June 2018.

## FREE DROP-IN FAMILY ACTIVITY: MAPPING MY HOME

28.07.18 > 02.09.18

WEEKENDS > 10AM to 3PM

COST > FREE, all materials provided

VENUE > Domain House, Dallas Brooks, South Yarra

BOOK ONLINE > Drop-in activity. No bookings necessary.

## EVENTS

Artists **Puna Yanima** and **Linda Puna** are mother and daughter. Their artworks from *Wangka Kutjara*, *Tjukurpa Kutju* are a bit like maps of the sacred sites of their traditional home in South Australia.

In this free drop-in activity, kids and families are invited to work together to create a map of their home or favourite places. Using the materials provided, families can draw and use collage to make their maps which can be attached to the gallery wall, or taken home.

## WALK & TALK: TWO VOICES

03.08.18 > 10.30AM to 12.30PM

COST > \$33 PER PERSON, includes Aboriginal Heritage Walk

VENUE > Domain House, Dallas Brooks, South Yarra

BOOK ONLINE > [bit.ly/2mqDwd5](https://bit.ly/2mqDwd5)

Join *Wangka Kutjara*, *Tjukurpa Kutju* curator **David Hagger** for a special opportunity to learn about the key themes of this exhibition, as well as the art practices of mother and daughter APY Lands artists Puna Yanima and Linda Puna.

The tour will start at Domain House and will conclude with an exclusive Aboriginal Heritage Walk through the Royal Botanic Gardens Indigenous Plant collection.



IMAGE > Photograph of Puna Yanima courtesy of Mimili Maku Arts. [Detail]

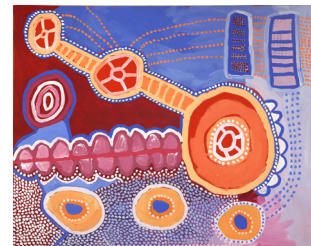


IMAGE > Linda Puna, *Ngayuku Ngura (My Home)*, 2018, acrylic on linen, 122 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Mimili Maku Arts and Blackartprojects.



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