

EXHIBITIONS

Artists of Ampilatwatja 22nd April 2014 - 10th May 2014

Ampilatwatja is in the heart of Alyawarr land on the Sandover Highway about 320 km NE of Alice Springs. The artists' work is distinguished by the microcosmic detail invested in elements of landscape.

The Community of Ampilatwatja (pronounced um-bludder-witch) is the largest of three communities under the Aherrenge Aboriginal Association. It is located about 320 km north-east of Alice Springs and has a population of about 350 people who are predominantly of the Alyawarr language group. Ampiltwatja is in the heart of Alyawarr land on the Sandover Highway. The Alyawar people have always lived there and have travelled between soaks in the hot weather and have close ties to the people who live at Lake Nash.

The first European in the region was Charles Winnecke, a surveyor, who passed through in 1877. Although the Alyawarr people were shy of the Europeans, Winnecke's expedition needed their help to find water in the desert, although they were not always careful with what they found and were known to waste water. In 1940, the land around Ampilatwatja, under the name of Ammaroo Station, was taken by Nugget Morton (who was connected to the infamous 1928 Coniston Massacre of between 30 and 60 people). The property subsequently changed hands a number of times and it was not until the mid 1980s that a small excision was made for the Alyawarr people. In the 1990s, with the return of Utopia Station to traditional ownership, the Alyawarr people of Ampilatwatja made a claim for their traditional homelands. As Banjo Morton says: "We never moved from this country.. This is our father's father's country. We can't leave it"

In 1999, a community arts centre was established, under the banner Artists of Ampilatwatja. This has provided the community with the means to increase economic opportunities, while, at the same time, reinforcing the value of the Alywarr people's culture.

The art of Ampilatwatja is distinctive amongst indigenous painting, using a broad spectrum of colour and focusing on the features of country viewed from a high vantage point. The root of Ampilatwatja art, as in all Indigenous art, is in the country. The finely dotted landscapes depict each artist's own particular country or place they have custodianship over. Apmer (country) and all the different bush medicines and bush tucker are also reflected within each painting. This information is mapping the country; each artist is painting her own little piece of one big map. Therefore artists themselves don't judge a painting as good or bad - these paintings are sacred paintings, not frivolously done.

The beauty of the landscapes comes from a close association with the land, being on it, sitting down on it. The painters' artistic inspiration comes from nature, and their deep understanding of the earth they walk upon. These artists paint their piece of country, each time revealing their love for the red earth that is their home. All great paintings share a common feature, they do more than reproduce in paint something that exists, or can be imagined - they also express the painter's special view about the subject.

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Joycie Morton
My Country (470-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
30cm x 107cm



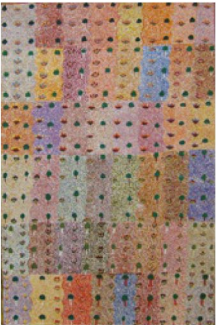
Joycie Morton
My Country (487-13) 2013
acrylic on canvas
61cm x 61cm



Kindy Kemarre Ross
Bush Flowers (89-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
46cm x 46cm



Julieanne Ngwarraye Morton
View of Country (424-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
91cm x 61cm



Theresa Ngwarraye Morton
View of Country (82-13) 2014
acrylic on linen
91cm x 61cm



Michelle Pula Holmes
My Country (544-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
91cm x 122cm



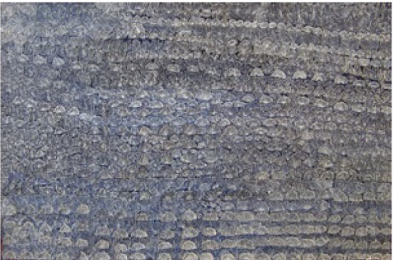
Kathleen Nanima Rambler
My Country (92-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
61cm x 61cm



Lily Kemarre Morton
Ampilatwatja Country (571-13) 2013
acrylic on linen
76cm x 76cm



Colleen Ngwarraye Morton
Women's Ceremony Bush Medicine (23-14) 2013
acrylic on linen
61cm x 61cm



Colleen Ngwarraye Morton
Women's Ceremony Bush Medicine (600-13) 2013
acrylic on linen



Elizabeth Ngwarri Bonney
My Mother's Country (454-11) 2013
acrylic on linen
91cm x 91cm



Melita Morton
My Country (10-12) 2013
acrylic on canvas
91cm x 107cm