



**Exotic colour, earthy clay pans, kaleidoscopic swirls, dashes, dots and pre historic imagery.**

**All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and .....**

An exhibition of Contemporary Aboriginal Art will be held in Wimbledon over the weekend of 11 – 13 June 2010. Artwork from the Central and Western Deserts and from Utopia in the Eastern Desert of Central Australia will be shown. The collection is probably the most comprehensive collection of paintings of Central and Western and Eastern Desert artists currently in the UK.

There are 42 artists on show and of these 33 are women. The introduction of tie-dyeing and batik making skills to the women of the Eastern Desert community of Utopia in the late 70's not only gave the women an opportunity to earn an income but also gave them a medium where they could experiment with their traditional story-telling paintings. The results are on view at this exhibition in Wimbledon. Strong graphics, kaleidoscopic swirls, riots of colour and an inherent spatial awareness are, again and again, the themes of these paintings.

The 'dreamtime' story or survival songs are reinforced through the iconography within each painting. Kathleen Petyarre's paintings are specific to a certain area and to the travels of the Mountain Devil Lizard. Using a stick she covers the whole surface of the canvas with varying size and density of dots resulting in a calm but graphic composition. Her sister Gloria, on the other hand, paints the story of medicine leaves using brushes she has made herself. Her canvases are a flow of brush strokes, layer upon layer, which result in a hypnotic and moving graphic so the viewer can see and feel the flow and swish of the leaves and story she depicts. Then there is Narbula Scobie Napurrula whose canvases display an extraordinary design and special awareness as she combines the patterns of women's body painting with the secret stories of the women's ceremonies.

With no 'formal' training and minimal guidance these artists sit cross legged, often surrounded by their family, in the dust and sand and will take hours of concentrated effort, layering paint over paint building and obscuring story over story to form the complex final canvas.

The contrast between the hot, dry, dusty environment and the conditions in which the artists work and the luscious, rich, graphics of the final paintings is a wonder to behold. What was initially an attempt by white Australians to teach basic craft skills to the most deprived members of Australia's black community has

subsequently become not only a huge financial industry but also a precious and vital avenue for the two societies to co exist, to learn and to respect each other.

The exhibition in Wimbledon will show paintings from these original batik artists; Minnie Pwerle, Gloria Petyarre and Kathleen Petyarre, Angeline Pwerle Ngala, Annie Pitjara Hunter and Joy Kngwarreye Jones to name but a few.

Also on show are works from Artists of the Central and Western Desert. Most famous of these are the three brothers, Warlimpirrnga, Thomas and Walala Tjapaltjari who, having been brought up following a traditional nomadic lifestyle in the Gibson Desert, walked out into the white man's world 1984. Their strong, earthy, traditional graphics provide a change of pace to the other paintings in this exhibition but their story is unique and the survival of the traditions on which they are based are threatened.

**Exhibition: Friday 11 – Sunday 13 June 2010 11am – 4.30pm**

**9 Parkside Avenue, Wimbledon Village, London SW19 5ES**

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