

PRESS RELEASE

Colours of Utopia

Japingka Gallery is launching its extensive 2006 Indigenous Fine Art Exhibition programme with an important exhibition of major new works by leading artists from the remarkable and remote community of Utopia (270 kms north east of Alice Springs). Japingka Gallery has commissioned a mixture of some of the best and most sought after artists from Utopia as well as a selection of some of the most promising and exciting new and emerging talent. The resulting paintings, depicting the artists' traditional Country, are the basis for this new exhibition of stunning paintings called "COLOURS of UTOPIA" which opens at 6.30 on Friday 17th February 2006.



The community of Utopia has a long history of artistic tradition and has produced some of the best-known Indigenous artists of our time. These include nationally and internationally acclaimed artists such as the late **Emily Kngwarreye**, together with **Gloria Petyarre**, **Minnie Pwerle** and her daughter, **Barbara Weir**. All these artists are now represented in various State and National Galleries as well as private collections.

Utopia is now one of the most famous of all the Central Desert painting Communities. Its reputation has been forged through the extraordinary depth of artistic talent within the community as well as its inspired use of modern colours to depict ancient "Dreaming" stories. For many thousands of years these Dreaming stories were handed down from generation to generation and were painted using a very limited palette of naturally occurring ochre pigments. In the late seventies women were introduced to the art of batik, giving them another vehicle for expressing their knowledge and respect for their country, which, in turn, undoubtedly influenced later works using modern art materials.

For some traditionalists, the move from the natural ochre pigments to modern synthetic polymers is controversial. However, the artists themselves have embraced the availability of different mediums and have proven adept at using a broad range of colours, weaving them into their stories. Barbara Weir, amongst others, still reverts to ochre every now and then, but it is their love of colour and their natural skill that sets these artists apart.

The younger generation of Utopia artists have followed the lead set by their Elders, and it is their confident and assured use of colour and form that marks them as the stars of the future. "COLOURS of UTOPIA" introduces and showcases many of these younger emerging artists, and their paintings sit comfortably side by side with their better-known Elders in this stunning exhibition. A great opportunity is thus provided to compare the work of mother and daughter, young and old, and the accomplished Elder with the exuberant youth.

Opening alongside in **Gallery 2**, as a counter-point to the "COLOURS of UTOPIA" exhibition, there will be two new exhibitions from diverse communities. The first features artists of the East Kimberley from communities between **Warmun** and **Kununurra** who work in natural ochre pigments. The second features softer acrylics showing beautiful, slightly naïve artworks from the emerging community of **Ampilatwatja** in the Northern Territory.

The exhibitions are open daily and run until 19th March, 2006.

Opening 6.30pm Friday the 17th February, open seven days, until 19th March, 2006.
@ Japingka Gallery, 47 High Street, Fremantle

Gallery Hours: Mon - Fri: 10.00am-5.30pm Sat: 10.00am-5.00pm Sun: 12.am-5.00pm. FREE ENTRY.

J A P I N G K A
INDIGENOUS FINE ART GALLERY



colours of UTOPIA

17th February - 19th March 2006

Featuring works by leading artists and introducing new and emerging artists from Utopia community

J A P I N G K A
INDIGENOUS FINE ART GALLERY

You are invited to the opening of

colours of UTOPIA

at Japingka Gallery, 47 High St, Fremantle

6.30pm Friday 17th February 2006

Exhibition continues until 19th March

Artists include

Aileen Mbitjana
Barbara Weir
Betty Club
Dolly Mills
Gloria Petyarre
Janelle Stockman
Lena Pwerle
Mary Morton
Minnie Pwerle
Rita Pwerle

Rosie Pwerle
Violet Petyarre
Anna Tilmouth
Hazel Morton
Jeannie Mills
Jedda Greeny
Judy Purvis
June Bird
Kathleen Ngale
Maggie Bird
Thelma Dixon

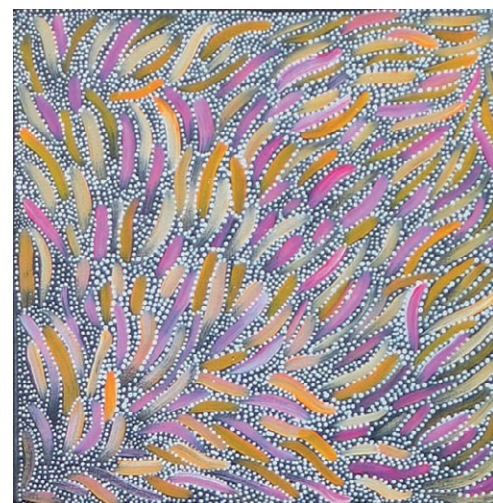


IMAGE LEFT: Minnie Pwerle

IMAGE CENTRE: Barbara Weir

IMAGE RIGHT: Judy Purvis

COVER IMAGE LEFT: Jeannie Mills

COVER IMAGE RIGHT: Mary Morton

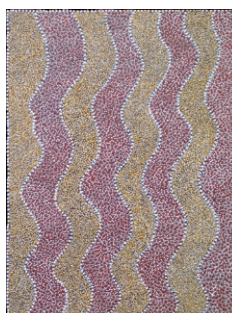
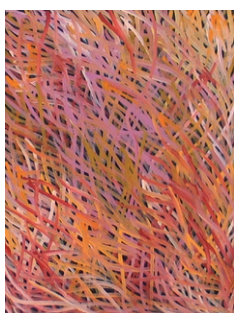


IMAGE FAR LEFT: Barbara Weir

IMAGE LEFT: Maggie Bird

J A P I N G K A
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www.japingka.com.au