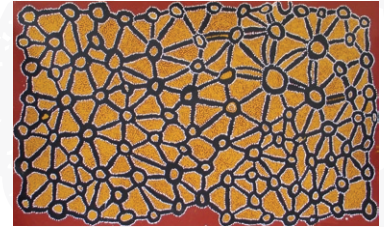


# PRESS RELEASE

Japingka Gallery in Association with The Spinifex Arts Project is proud to present;

## Art of the Spinifex People



Fred Grant  
"Tjartuu" 90 x 146cm

**The remote Spinifex People of the Great Victorian Desert occupy a place at the heart of recent indigenous history. Their ancestor spirits were the ones who took their spears to the coast at the Great Australian Bight, to beat back the rising seas that threatened to cover the Nullarbor Plains at the end of the ice age 7000 years ago.**

Things were quiet for a while, until the atomic age. Then the Spinifex People's land was chosen as the test site for nuclear explosions at Maralinga. The people were encouraged to move off their lands and onto mission settlements, at places like Cundeelee and Warburton. Some remained behind, and moved deeper into their remote homelands. No one sighted them for another 30 years. They became the very last of the desert nomads to make contact with white Australia.

By the mid 1980's a new phase of restitution began, along with the cleanup of contaminated country. A Foundation was established to compensate indigenous communities who had been displaced. The Cundeelee mission closed, and people moved closer to their homelands. Finally a new outstation, Tjuntjunjara, was built in the south-west corner of Spinifex country. The people had come back.

By the 1990's the Federal Court had begun to rule on the rights of indigenous people to their ancestral homelands, starting with the Mabo case of 1992. Three years later the Spinifex People lodged their own claim over 55,000 square kilometres. This claim, the first to be settled in Western Australia, was granted in 2001.

As part of this process, the community elders had begun documenting their family responsibilities and connections to waterholes and hunting grounds, and custodianship of ceremonial sites. They made paintings showing these links, and submitted them as evidence in their land title claim. Ten of these paintings were gifted to the people of Western Australia and held in trust at the WA Museum.

From that experience, the people have continued to use painting to reinforce their traditional culture, with its deep roots into their homelands in the Great Victorian Desert. The Spinifex People held their first selling exhibition in Western Australia at Japingka Gallery in 2002. Now the artists are making another visit to exhibit their latest works at Japingka Gallery in Fremantle.

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*Opening on the same day in Gallery 2*

## Judy Martin Napangardi New Paintings from Lajamanu

As the daughter of famous Lajamanu artist, Lorna Napurrula Fencer, Judy Martin continues to create strong paintings from the Women's Ceremonial stories of her Warlpiri homelands. She focuses on stories from the Women's site at Mina Mina in the Tanami Desert, where Warlpiri women come together to re-enact the Dreaming story of the Ancestor spirits who journeyed across this country from Alice Springs. Judy is carrying on the strong artistic and ceremonial traditions of her mother.



Judy Martin  
"Kama Kurlang - Digging Stick Ceremony" 124 x 85cm

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**Both exhibitions opening 6.30pm Friday the 1st September, open seven days, until 8th October, 2006  
@ Japingka Gallery, 47 High Street, Fremantle.**

**Print quality images are available from [www.japingka.com.au](http://www.japingka.com.au) for print media purposes.**

**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  
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