



Japingka Gallery

Founding member of **Art.Trade**

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MEDIA RELEASE

“Tali & Jila” – Sand hills & Waterholes

Exciting New works from the remote Wangkatjungka Community in the Kimberley

In what is a truly remarkable success story, and within the short space of just two and a half years, the talented artists of the Wangkatjungka Community (pronounced “*wongka-jongka*”) have overcome enormous obstacles to take their art and culture all the way from their remote Kimberley Community situated on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert to the acclaim of the urban art centre of the world, **New York** and the prestigious **2004 New York Contemporary Art Fair**.

Though lacking the financial and infrastructure resources as well as the recognition of their more famous “neighbours” in the Kimberley communities of Balgo Hills and Warmun, the artists of the Wangkatjungka Community have recently taken the Indigenous fine art market by storm with highly successful exhibitions in every capitol city in Australia (except Adelaide which gets its turn next year) just through the sheer talent, power and freshness of their artwork. Testament to the success of the **Wangkatjungka Arts Project** is the achievement of two of the senior artists, **Stumpy Brown** and **Nada Rawlins**, who were selected as finalists in the **2004 Telstra Awards** and the successful debut of the **Wangkatjungka Arts Project** at this years **New York Contemporary Art Fair**.

Even with no dedicated Art Centre nor any arts funding, the Wangkatjungka Community was determined to emulate the success and recognition accorded to many of their relatives living in the Balgo Hills and Warmun Communities. Both of these Communities boasted purpose built Art Centres and arts administration support. The Wangkatjungka Community did not have ready access to any of these facilities and even basics such as canvas and paint were very scarce.

In 2001, the Wangkatjungka Community approached Japingka Gallery to represent them and assist them to develop and take their art to a much wider audience. They knew of Japingka Gallery through its long history of work with other Kimberley artists such as the famous Jimmy Pike. Japingka Gallery’s Exhibition Director, David Wroth headed up to the community in his 4WD loaded with rolls of canvas and assorted paints and painting materials with little idea of what he would encounter in this little known Community.

What he did encounter was an enormous pool of raw talent with a pent up enthusiasm to record their stories on canvas. David later commented **“I was astounded by the depth of natural talent within the community and I was particularly taken with the excitement, enthusiasm and sheer joy unleashed by the opportunity to paint their Country and their stories. As they painted, many of the Elder artists would sing the stories that they were committing to canvas, thus passing on the traditional stories to the next generation. It was a privilege just to be there!”**

David has formed a strong relationship with the artists in the community and he now visits the Wangkatjungka Community several times a year for up to two months at a time and each time the work produced naturally develops and evolves to an even higher level. On his last visit some of the Elder artists began to work in traditional ochre pigments and these stunning ochre paintings form the backbone of the new **“Tali & Jila”** Exhibition. They provide a beautiful counterbalance to the joyful, bright acrylic colours used by the younger artists.

Since the **Wangkatjungka Art Project** began exhibiting around Australia, many of the artists have made the most of the opportunity to travel out of their country for the first time. Four of the Artists will be making the long trip down from the Kimberley to attend the opening of their **“Tali & Jila”** Exhibition and they are really looking forward to meeting new people and telling them the stories of their Country as depicted in their unique paintings. Not to be Missed!

“Tali & Jila” – Waterholes & Sand hills

opens at 6.30pm on Friday the 3rd December, and runs seven days a week until 31st January, 2005.

@ Japingka Gallery, **47 High Street, Fremantle**

Gallery Hours are **Mon - Fri:** 10.00am 5.30pm. **Sat:** 10.00am–5.30pm **Sun:** 12.am–5.00pm.

Admission is free to the public.