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DEATHSCAPES AFTERLIVES

(part 1)

Edited by Marina Gržinić

Preamble

The volume *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence* (ed Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese, eds., Routledge, 2022) saw its international launch via zoom in May 2022. It is reviewed in this journal by Saša Kesić.

Mapping Deathscapes grew out of the research project *Deathscapes: Mapping Race and State Violence in Settler Societie*s, funded by the Australia Research Council (ARC) under its Discovery Projects Scheme (DP 160100303) from 2016 to 2020.

Following on from discussions at the launch, contributors to the volume initiated a number of projects under the broad heading **Deathscapes Afterlives.**

The first of these **Deathscapes Afterlives** projects takes the form of a two-part publication in two successive issues of *Art and Documentation* to be published in 2023. These two related publications were initiated and led by Marina Gržinić, in collaboration with the journal editors.

Included in this current issue of *Art and Documentation* **DEATHSCAPES AFTERLIVES (part 1)** consists of a brief introduction by Deathscapes' lead investigators Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese, followed by two speeches delivered at the launch of *Mapping Deathscapes*, by Nicole Watson and Yannick Giovanni Marshall. It ends with an extended dialogue by Jan Turner and Albertina Viegas, "Continuous Being-The Artworks of Mr Ward."

Part 2 will be published by *Art and Documentation* later in 2023. It consists of an introduction and further analysis of Deathscapes by Marina Gržinić, followed by a dialogue on occupied Kashmir between Goldie Osuri and Iffat Fatima. Also in the issue are a visual essay on Chile by Antonio Traverso; reflections on the photography and absence by Marziya Mohammedali, and Marina Gržinić's reflections on Europe, the European Union and the war in Ukraine. The issue ends with a sequence of poems by Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes.

Introduction

Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese

Mounting Indigenous deaths in custody and serial asylum seeker deaths at the border and in detention prisons are all systemically generated by transnational iterations of the racial state and its diverse non-state actors-including transport, surveillance and security companies. It was this unfolding necropolitical crisis that prompted the development of the Deathscapes project. In an attempt to identify the patterns of racial violence deployed by the state and its operatives, the project developed the analytic of the deathscape as what succinctly captures all of the relations of power that lethally impact on the lives of targeted racialised groups.

This special issue of *Art and Documentation*, published in two parts, emerges from the generous invitation from Marina Gržinić for Deathscapes to speak to its afterlives, that is, to the new embodiments and contestatory vectors that continue to be animated in the wake of the formal cessation of the project in 2020.

Across the two special issues, a range of work powerfully transposes the analytic of the deathscape to new international locations and subjects: they include colonial Nairobi, occupied Kashmir, political violence and memory in Chile and the complex systems of relations between Ethiopia, its Black diaspora and the white Australian settler state. In keeping with the way in which Deathscapes mobilised a heterogeneity of genres, media and languages, the contributions to these two special issues encompass a celebratory mix of images, interviews, testimony, poems and reflections.

What emerges from the contributions of these two special issues are powerful voices that expose various modalities of racialised state violence, indict its operatives and, crucially, that also work to transmute it through creative acts that bear witness to the fact that the dead, in the loving hands of the friends and allies that survive their passing, continue to be animated in inspiring afterlives—as is so eloquently evidenced by Jan Turner and Albertina Viegas' "Continuous Being-The Artworks of Mr Ward." The painful death in state custody of Mr Ward was the very first case study explored by the Deathscapes project and we are honoured and moved to be able to include this expanded exploration of his "continuous life," written by two of his old friends and allies with the approval of his family, as part of the Afterlives project.

In one of the poems that concludes Part 2 of this "Afterlives" special issue, "Under the Oldest

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Tree," Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes invokes his Ethiopian grandmother who reminds him to ask his elders to plant him under the oldest tree-where "you will grow roots and seeds." In the shadow of the now-elderly tree of Deathscapes, these two special issues bear witness to unexpected seeds that have struck deep roots and are generating new and impassioned forms of future-oriented justice.

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Nicole Watson

ON MAPPING DEATHSCAPES: *DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES OF RACIST AND TRANSNATIONAL VIOLENCE* (A BOOK LAUNCH SPEECH)

BOOK LAUNCH SPEECH BY NICOLE WATSON ON MAPPING DEATHSCAPES: DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES OF RACIST AND TRANSNATIONAL VIOLENCE. EDITED BY SUVENDRINI PERERA AND JOSEPH PUGLIESE. ABINGDON, OX: ROUTLEDGE, 2022.

Good evening, I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people, the owners of the land upon which I live and work, the Cammeraygal people. It is a privilege for me to participate in the launch of *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence*. I want to congratulate the editors, Suvendrini Peraera and Joseph Pugliese, and the authors whose rich chapters offer new and empowering lenses through which we can see the world. I was excited when I received my copy of this book. From the first page of the introductory chapter, which acknowledges the contributions of Wiradjuri activist Uncle Ray Jackson, I knew this book would provide intellectual succour and speak to my heart because it celebrates the intellectual traditions of grassroots activists. The decision by Uncle Ray and other activists to give Aboriginal passports to our brothers and sisters who have been dehumanised by the refugee policies of successive Australian governments demonstrates the brilliance and creativity of these traditions. Today, these traditions are more important than ever, reminding us all of the real power we have to speak back to the violence revealed in the chapters of this book.

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Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence illuminates what Patricia Hill Collins describes as "lethal intersections," that is, multiple and intersecting forms of oppression manifested in violent practices imposed on Indigenous peoples, immigrant communities, and others affected by marginalisation. Such analysis enabled me to see how past protection policy, under which my ancestors were removed from Country and herded onto remote reserves, are perpetuated in today's immigrant detention programmes.

One of the revelations in this book that deeply disturbed me was how substandard care administered to those in detention has become the norm, so that illness and even death are seen as inevitable and devoid of human agency. In the chapter "Deadly Prescriptions: Immigration detention, mismedication and the necropolitics of uncare," Jonathan Xavier Inda poignantly demonstrates how avoidable deaths caused by woefully inadequate medical practices, are accepted in immigration detention facilities without consequence. The story of Juan Carlos, a 26-year-old man who died in a detention facility due to medical neglect and incompetence, is truly horrifying.

After reading this important book, one might feel overwhelmed by the seemingly unstoppable power of systems that condemn those on the margins of society as expendable. But in the pages of *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence*, you'll find tools we can use to interrupt them. One such tool is honouring those whose lives have been treated as worthless by naming them and telling their stories. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the authors whose work makes Indigenous women visible. Bronwyn Carlson exposes how the endemic violence suffered by Indigenous women consistently fails to generate outrage in Australian social media. At the same time, Aboriginal women are using social media as a medium to speak back against our invisibility. Hannah McGlade and Stella Tarrant demonstrate the power of storytelling in their chapter "Say Her Name," using the stories of Jody Gore, Tamica Mullaley and baby Charlie, and Ms. Dhu, McGlade and Tarrant elucidate the multiple forms of violence that Aboriginal women face in the legal system. One of the gifts of this book is the recognition of the power of art to make visible what has previously been erased. This is highlighted by Tess Allas and Ruben Allas in their chapter "Artistic Responses to historical and ongoing genocidal violence against Aboriginal women." Tess Allas and Ruben Allas show how First Nations artists speak out about massacres that are all too often omitted from settler histories by bringing this violence back into focus in the colonial present.

I want to thank each author for the wisdom and stories they so generously shared with us. I usually never read an anthology from the first page to the last. I usually pick the chapters that capture my interest the most. But *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence* was a rare exception. Reading this book was an extraordinary journey that revealed the connections between Indigenous peoples, members of immigrant communities, and others who experience relentless oppression. The book also celebrates the knowledge within communities that have experienced marginalisation, and the resilience of those who live at the grassroots level, personified by Uncle Ray Jackson, who never lost sight of his power. Thank you.

Nicole Watson is a Murri woman from south-east Queensland, who belongs to the Munanjali and Birri Gubba Peoples. She is currently employed as an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney. Nicole has published a large body of work on legal issues that are of particular concern to Indigenous communities.

Yannick Giovanni Marshall

A DEATHSCAPE IN COLONIAL NAIROBI

When Billie Holiday took the stage in 1937, picked up the microphone and performed her lament "Strange Fruit," she set a dark and ghostly crooning as the signature tune for America's festival of lynching, replacing imitation ragtime. Its images of "blood on the leaves" and the black bodies "hanging from the poplar trees" in Southern breeze like "strange fruit," were likely inspired after its writer, Abel Meeropol, who saw a photograph of the August 7, 1930 lynching of Thomas Shipp and Abram Smith in Marion, Indiana.

As striking and upsetting as the images of lynched Black people's bodies dangling like fruit may have been to a more protected audience in 1937, it was not the first time the metaphor had been used.

Twenty years earlier, the editor of the *Times of East Africa*, angered by what he saw to be a plague of native "impertinence" as well as by the colonial administration's arrest and jailing of a group of white settlers who had taken the initiative to put a dramatic end to it by illegally flogging three Africans on the steps of the Nairobi courthouse, had used similar symbolism for a different end. "Let the Government take warning. We have suffered too long, at first in silence, following this in quiet protest. Entreaties and warning, temperate speech and determined assertion have alike failed in their object. Our blood is roused now and will not be quick to cool. Again we say let the authorities be warned; they are living on the brink of a volcano which may break out at any moment and the fruit of that eruption, when it comes, may be black fruit and may hang from the branches of trees." The editorial was partly incitement to turn the settlers against the "insolent" native population, and partly a promise to litter the colony with the corpses of Black people if the colonial state did not get its act together and become a reliable instrument of racial control and violence against African natives.

The settler state is a deathscape. The languishing and waiting while decomposing in detention centers and jails, the celebrated snuffing out of the lives of racialized people by the forces of state order, the execution centers of death row camps, and the disposal of bodily waste after the execution of the law against a captured body - all these nightly atrocities of the settler state are clear to those who have no political interest in seeing them remain hidden. But we must also ponder whether the state is merely an abstraction that can absolve settler "society," or whether the elephant question must be set aside, whether the fabric or mechanism in the settler population imagination is not as full of rot and carrion as the offices and backyards of the settler state. Whether the state is a repository for the excesses of settler culture that leaves room for a more humane settler culture after colonial settlement and functions in the same way that the concepts of bad apples or police brutality leave room for the possibility of a good police force. What if

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the state to be condemned is set up like a piñata, an imagined beast onto which we can blame and condemn all the normal violence of settler culture, while our hopes for a better society or a post-settler colonial society remain untouched.

The settler state of the East Africa Protectorate was nominally responsible for torture, flogging, and eventually mass internment and execution of political prisoners. But this was the very state that the most prominent members of the settler society condemned as liberal for coddling the natives, for allowing the N-words to become so brazen as to rudely address a white woman on the street. This settler state is the state that the settlers said they would overthrow if the state did not immediately change its policies toward the natives, including calling for executions of natives accused of rape and an end to restrictions placed on settlers for the flogging and murdering their native employees. The settlers of the East Africa Protectorate threatened to overthrow the state and cover East Africa with black fruit hanging from the branches of trees. They wrote that they would soon do things the way their compatriots across the pond did in another province of the white, racist settler empire, the United States of the early 1900s. The settler state was not racist enough for them. When calls were made to abolish the police after the recorded suffocation of George Floyd, conservatives made videos warning that blacks had better hope the police continued to exist, because if they had their way, no taxpayer time or money would be wasted on lawsuits against blacks. In 2021, dissatisfied with the colony's mass incarceration, reservations, immigrant detention, and public murders, a settler mob, equipped with nooses, confederate battle flags, and ethnic slurs, sought to overthrow this unsatisfactorily racist settler state.

For the settler-colonists, whether centuries before or yesterday, the settler-state is never settler enough. The settler state, which we prove to be genocidal, is only the bare minimum, never deathly enough, an instrument for the settler population. In fact, there are currently movements in all settler states and in all colonial metropolises (especially those where the colonized have washed back to the shores of the "homeland" in significant numbers) to replace the false settler state that coddles the migrant/native with a state that better suits the instincts of the settlers.

This is why the concept of "deathscapes" is so compelling. Accounting for every inch of settler space. Not just the genocidal state hovering over society, but every inch of land claimed by colonial geography, it can hold every inch of settler imagination as the problem. An accounting of settler sovereignty that is not exhausted in the colonial administrative carceral state, but in the much broader geography of the always present lynch mob. Thus, not simply a listing of murders on the frontier, but the rot in the liberal imagination evident in the worship of peddlers of flesh as founding fathers. Where colonial institutions are not rejected as offal but celebrated as achievements of human progress and democracy, so that an officer wrestling with and executing an immigrant on the ground is the victim and the hero, so that repurposed cotton plantations are seen as rehabilitation centers, so that elections are progressive forms of collective governance rather than afterlives of treaty scams.

Deathscapes makes possible an accounting not only with the goings-on of the corpse machines, but also with the always present promise of the edge of the volcano, a landscape of black fruit hanging from the branches of trees. One that raises a question skillfully avoided in the radical European anti-state traditions, namely whether the abolition of the state is not the end of history, but the gate that opens to a bloody sight.

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MAPPING DEATHSCAPES: DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES OF RACIAL AND BORDER VIOLENCE, SUVENDRINI PERERA AND JOSEPH PUGLIESE (EDITORS), 288 PP., ROUTLEDGE, US, 2022

The volume *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence* grew out of the research project Deathscapes: Mapping Race and State Violence in Settler Societies, funded by the Australia Research Council (ARC) under its Discovery Projects Scheme (DP 160100303) from 2016 to 2020. According to editors Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese, the book was developed by an international team of authors who studied race, violence, and resistance in North America, Australia, and Europe. The Deathscapes website is one of the outcomes of the Deathscapes project that was funded by the ARC. The edited volume and the website are complementary outcomes of the same project.

Deathscapes project aims "to make visible the shared strategies, policies, practices and rationales of state violence deployed in the management of separate racialized categories of the population" (4). Deathscapes features individual case studies of testimonies and accounts of deaths in custody as a kind of "anti-archive"- "it refuses the classificatory categories that organise the official archives of the state, categories that reproduce their own forms of epistemic and symbolic violence" (11). Because violence occurs in different places and throughout history, this site aims to critically and analytically examine how deaths are perceived through various forms of witnessing and activism that often go unnoticed.

In the introduction to *Mapping Deathscapes*, the editors *Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese with contributions by Michelle Bui, Pilar Kasat, Ayman Qwaider and Raed Yacoub,* **e**xplain that

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the Deathscapes project was inspired by the work of the late Uncle Ray Jackson, a Wiradjuri activist who held Australia accountable for the deaths of people who died in custody. Ray Jackson, who died in 2015, was a Wiradjuri activist and elder. He was president of the Indigenous Social Justice Association (ISJA) and a prominent campaigner for the rights of Indigenous Australians. Jackson was part of the Stolen Generations, as the Australian government deprived his birth mother of custody of her four children (including Jackson) because of her Aboriginal race, rather than granting her a war widow's pension (his father was killed in World War II, fighting Japanese forces on the Kokoda Track). It was not until he was in his teens that he learned he had been adopted. His name was changed and he was sent to a Catholic institution for a year before being adopted by a white family.

He was affectionately known as Uncle Ray and was one of Australia's most prominent and knowledgeable campaigners on the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody. Between 1991 and 1997, Jackson was coordinator of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Watch Committee, which was funded by the government agency ATSIC. However, when the government under Prime Minister John Howard cut off funding to the committee, Jackson formed the Indigenous Social Justice Association (ISJA) to continue the work. Uncle Ray campaigned against deaths in custody and established a series of Aboriginal passport ceremonies in 2010 that represented “an act of reciprocal recognition in defiance of the colonizing settler state, a compact between the very bodies on whose violent exclusion that state’s sovereignty was founded” (1). Moreover, Indigenous deaths in custody are linked to refugee deaths at sea or in detention centers. This is now a way for necrocapitalist states to demonstrate their supreme authority to govern their people and territories.

In the **first part** of the book, “Deathscapes intersectionalities,” the concepts and features of the Deathscapes site are expanded. In the first text, this is done through several case studies of state violence against different groups; in the second, with "the fundamental debt" of the Australian state to its Indigenous people; and in the third, with gendered and sexual violence against women in immigration detention in Australia and the United States.

Patricia Hill Collins, in “Violence and intersecting power relations,” examines violence as a mechanism that operates within a system of power to oppress minority groups such as women, people of color, Indigenous people, youth, the poor, immigrants, religious minorities, and queer populations. Collins first points out that victims of violence are blamed for the violence -“dominant discourse depicts subordinate groups as either initiating violence or as being so threatening that they require disciplinary violence to keep them in their place” (28). Therefore, it is important that those who fight against violence and for social justice are perceived as intellectual leaders within marginalized communities, as well as among individuals, and that they come from below. For example, they can point out forms of violence that are so routinized that they have become invisible, help discriminated groups resist the institutions that organize and perpetrate institutionalized violence through ideology, propaganda, and/or hate speech, analyze the organizations and dynamics of intersecting power relations, and so on.

In "The colonial debtscape," Maria Giannacopoulos takes as her starting point the concept of “nomophilia” - the blind love of the law that enables the failure of decolonial justice in colonial Australia, i.e., the systematic discrimination against Indigenous, refugee, and economically disenfranchised populations. Nomophilia gives rise to nomopoly, which is “a monopoly in the creation of nomos/law, but in a colonial context, it has the added feature of structurally foreclosing the operations of the first laws of Aboriginal peoples by subjecting all to its monolithic rule” (46). Therefore, Deathscapes is of inestimable importance because it is not focused exclusively on individual local issues but looks at state crimes globally, appealing for urgent intellectual and political solidarity. Deathscapes works “to reveal in more detail the relevance of the Australian Constitution, as nomopoly, to the carcerality and related harm.” It generates (51),

because of the disavowed sovereign Australian debt to Aboriginal people, what Giannacopoulos refers to as "debtscape."

Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese analyze, in "'You have to pay with your body': sexual violence, border violence and the settler state," sexual violence in immigration detention in immigration detention centers in two colonial nation-states, Australia and the United States, and emphasize that these forms of violence occur at the border, "both at the legislative level and at the level of expansive discretionary powers which enable multiple forms of non-accountable force and violence to be directed against non-white and racialized bodies that are cast as threats to national security" (64). In the case of immigrant women, sexual violence remains invisible because they are deemed guilty before they commit the crime, so the ability to seek any kind of justice is virtually nonexistent without a legitimate legal basis. As an example, the authors cite the case of "the Australian coastal detention camp in Nauru, where inmates say they were asked to strip and pose naked for guards in order to access the most basic everyday goods (such as soap) and practices (a hot shower for their children)" (68), while in the U.S. there are documented cases of women being taken out of their cells at night to have sex, fondle in front of others, etc. These types of violence, of course, also apply to LGBTQI+ refugees who fled their countries of origin because of homophobia and then experienced in detention centers the very things they were trying to flee. And indeed, the most disturbing cases are women who became pregnant in the camps as a result of rape. On the other hand, the security guards, border guards, and bureaucrats who perpetrate this kind of violence are guaranteed impunity through structural and institutional normativity.

The **second part** of the book, "Making Indigenous women visible in the deathscape," examines Australian colonial violence against Indigenous women. While the first text addresses two murderous silences—the silence about the continuity of border violence of the present and the past, and the media's neglect of stories related to violence against Indigenous women and girls—the second text illustrates critical work aimed at reviving the stories of women whose lives have been taken. The section ends with a poem written to commemorate the death of a 36-year-old woman in a police cell after she was arrested for drunkenness.

Bronwyn Carlson, in "Data silence in the settler archive: Indigenous femicide, deathscapes and social media," points to the fact that "the violence of the settler state is enacted through diverse practices that render Indigenous women, Indigenous transgender women, and non-binary lives unsafe and have resulted in their deaths" (84). Since non-white stories are not considered newsworthy in the mainstream media, Indigenous peoples who follow settler revisionist narratives bring to light the disappearance and murder of women, girls, and non-binary people through social media platforms. Carlson first discusses "the way in which Indigenous women have been represented historically as gendered subjects that experience racism, sexism and gendered violence" (86)—as those who are helpful but expendable, as those who do not fit the image of a desirable sexual being and engender a brutal form of misogyny, as immoral and indecent and a threat to white Australia, etc. Second, she considers the possibilities of adapting to the trappings of colonization in the form of social network engagement to uncover the archeology of everyday violence, as there is a way "to connect across vast distances and diverse populations, connecting us to a global network of Indigenous people," (90) and speak about what the mainstream media would never show - the Indigenous truth. Finally, the author attempts to deconstruct the colonial legacy by citing numerous recent examples: over 100,000 women protested in the streets on March 15, 2020 to say enough is enough and violence against women must end, including the double standards regarding violence against women, not talking about the perpetrators, lack of attention and emotion surrounding the violent deaths of Ms. Dhu, Veronica Baxter, or Ms. Daley.

Hannah McGlade and Stella Tarrant, in "'Say her name': naming Aboriginal women in

the justice system," present the cases of three Aboriginal women through "the international #SayHerName campaign, which sheds light on the fact that women of color are victims of police and structural violence, although their lives and deaths are often ignored and rendered invisible by white society and its institutions, including the law" (106). The first, Jodi Gore, was accused of murdering her partner in 2015, sentenced to life in prison, and released after four years during which three children were taken from her, only one of whom was returned. The second, Tamica Mulally, had a ten-month-old baby, Charlie, who was abducted and murdered in 2014. After Tamica tried to go home with her baby, she was beaten by Mervyn Bell in the street, ended up in the hospital, and her father unsuccessfully tried to report the baby's abduction to police. The third, Ms. Dhu, died in custody in 2014, two days after being arrested for unpaid fines. She had been assaulted by her partner before her arrest and begged for medical help, which she was denied. "The violence [Jody, Tamica and Ms. Dhu] faced was a matter of life and death, and they fought against it with all their considerable resources up until the deaths each of them encountered - and then, with their families and communities, they continue to fight." (121) Therefore, the repeated saying of their names constitutes a strong act of resistance and a way to keep them with us.

Alison Whittaker, in "Close the Inquest," "follows family and community members as they walk in procession to a courtroom to await the coroner's pronouncement on the death of a 36-year-old Wiradjuri woman, Ms. Maher, in a police cell after she was taken into custody for drunkenness" (82). Based on her experience as a legal scholar, Whittaker can predict what a medical examiner will say in a courtroom - "Looks down to read things like 'criminal history' and 'drug use' and 'antibodies' and 'benzodiazepines' and we know this unsubtle and cruel clinical pivot means the Coroner will soon say 'protocol breached' and 'could have been prevented' and 'should' and 'training' and 'apologise for any further distress'." (128), - or not say - "And she does say these things but not 'racism' or 'killed' and then she says 'close the inquest' but it never really will." (128) The goal of this poem that closes the section is to expose the cruel practices of Indigenous femicide, and to commemorate the resistance that families and communities put up - "Like all photos on these placards, it was taken in the course of a life in the same way we're all photographed by loved ones." (127)

The **third part** of the book, "Refugees in the deathscape: Crimes of peace," explores the necropolitical systems of refugee extermination in Europe and the United States. Four authors address "the deathscapes produced and maintained by a state's crimes of peace" (131) - in the Mediterranean, the Belgian colonization of the Congo, antisemitism and the Holocaust in Austria, Islamophobia in Spain, the fascist nationalism of the former Yugoslavia, anti-immigration rhetoric related to Brexit and European Union member states, and in the care of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Maurizio Albahari, in "The confined sea and the wavering of sovereignty," first illustrates his non-binary antonyms "sea" and "sovereignty" in the title with the 2015 song "No Search, No Rescue" by Jehan Bseiso, which "brings readers to the violent existential and geopolitical interstice navigated by those with war behind them, and the sea as the only way forward" (133), given that since 1993, more than 40.000 people have died both at the EU's external borders and on its soil during arrest, deportation, or detention. In other words, the sea is a symbol of every struggle against sovereignty. Then Albahari uses the phrase "crimes of peace," borrowed from the psychiatric discourse of Franca Basaglia Ongaro and Franco Basaglia, "to index the liberal-democratic work of maintaining the current migration-management sovereign 'system' in place" (136), in the form of building fences and walls, with sensors, x-ray machines, drones, armed agents, and detention centers. And when it comes to the political space of the Mediterranean, among the crimes of peace, the author mentions slavery, mass expulsions, forced conversions, genocide, population exchanges, etc. - Mediterranean "coastal populations are

casually asked to become vigilantes of the European periphery-reporting any trespassing, and in charge of captivity" (141). For without the commission of the crimes of peace (which make the "democratic" and "liberal" European nations continue to commit crimes against "immigration") the sovereign liberal-democratic mobility regime cannot function.

Marina Gržinić, in "Racialized violence in Europe: the Genealogy of Amnesia Project and the immobilization of refugees?," begins with the massive pro-refugee movement that emerged in Vienna and Austria in 2012 and came to a brutal end in 2021 as it was suppressed by the mainstream media due to the death toll from the Covid 19 pandemic. The EU thus abandons millions of people whose plight is precisely the consequence of past colonialism and neocolonial policies. Gržinić's response to these European racist concepts is the project "Genealogy of Amnesia," but it is also an account of "the overlapping of two forms of racialization and control: On the one hand, refugees' immobilization, their forced inactivity, being sequestered in camps in Europe, and, on the other, the intensified, loosened or postponed lockdown of 'Europeans' due to Covid-19 in 2020" (149). The goal of "Genealogy of Amnesia" was to uncover memories of Belgium's genocidal policies in its former colony of Congo, reflected today in the fact that the unemployment rate of people originating from the former colonies is four times higher than in the rest of Belgium; the antisemitism in Austria during and after the World War II, which was transferred to Muslims (anti-Muslim racism) after 2000; and the turbo-fascism in the former Yugoslavia, which has been active since the 1990s until today in the form of historical revisionism and the relativization of communism and fascism. Analyzing these memories, she concludes that "to leave and to become a refugee is due to colonialism, imperialism and present proxy wars," (156) and "refugee camps are kept continuously into a form of dead territories with lives that serve for extraction, while the white wage workers are part of hyper-divisive processes regulated by time and new technologies; captured in procedures of hyper mediation, digitalization, control" (158).

M. I. Franklin, in "Life and death at the digitalized border: 'Access denied,'" focuses specifically on "the digital, networked dimensions to border-keeping at the gates of 'Fortress Europe' and the shores of the post-Brexit United Kingdom" (164). These automated border guards and the human guards who enforce deterrence, search, and rescue measures are actually private military and security companies working on behalf of government agencies. And this privatization of border control frees the state from direct involvement in the deaths - it does not kill the undesirables directly, but lets them die. In the case of the European Union, such crimes are relativized by its status as a metastate, as it "requires its member-states to submit to EU-level laws and policies and yet provides them with a venue in which they can assert national interests (namely, to the Council of the European Union) respectively" (172). For example, the European Council is responsible for the EU border management agency Frontex, which is a private sector actor. Finally, when it comes to resistance, "it is taking place in a myriad of ways and by any means available: from providing Wi-Fi connections at the border, or phone batteries and chargers, to fighting disproportionate legislation in national and international courts, to developing cross-border and cross-sector education and organizational strategies, within but also beyond academe to change public and political opinion" (176).

Jonathan Xavier Inda examines, in "Fatal prescriptions: immigration detention, mismedication and the necropolitics of uncare," the investigation into custodial neglect and its fatal consequences, primarily in the death of Juan Carlos Barres, a 26-year-old HIV-positive native of El Salvador, who died of infection because he did not receive adequate treatment in the Lerdo Pre-Trial Detention Facility in Bakersfield, California, where he was detained. In the immigration detention system, then, necropolitics has been enacted - since the early 1990s, "it has been common for individuals and groups to cast undocumented migrants - typically imagined as Mexican and now increasingly also as Central American - as criminals who endanger

the well-being of the general population and imperil the security of the nation" (185). Therefore, detention has become an increasingly profitable technology for managing migration because the more immigrants are imprisoned - the greater the profit. The necropolitics of immigration detention is closely related to inadequate and negligent medical care, which the author labels as the necropolitics of uncare. In the case of Juan Carlos, "the policies and procedures put in place at the facility to provide care, in particular for HIV/AIDS, were designed or structured in such a way as to ensure that detainees would not receive appropriate treatment" (189).

In the **fourth part** of the book, "Aesthetic witnessing in the deathscape," the focus is again on Australia and Canada, with acts of aesthetic witness. Three chapters' deal with "buried histories of colonial massacre and how they may be uncovered and made visible anew in and for the present," (201), through art, in the function of bearing witness, the practice of resistance and survival, and counter-witness to state violence.

Tess Allas and Ruben Allas, in "Artistic responses to historical and ongoing genocidal violence against Aboriginal women," present the works of several artists who, with their art, fought for justice for the victims of genocidal violence. In 2017, Terry McCue created the exhibition *Ripples of Loss in Canada*, which presents "a series of 16 paintings depicting the skeletal remains of the missing women, each clothed in a red dress which has become synonymous with the artistic movement that calls for justice for these women" (204). Just a year earlier (in 2016), Australian Tess Allas and Canadian David Garneau, two Indigenous curators, curated the exhibition *With Secrecy and Despatch*, which commemorated the 200th anniversary of the 1816 Appin Massacre. Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Julie Gough contributed to this exhibition by "uncovering and re-presenting historical stories as part of an ongoing project that questions and re-evaluates the impact of the past on our present lives," (206) in the form of installation of videos and prints collectively titled *Hunting Ground*. First Nations Canadian artist Adrian Stimson focuses on identity formation in terms of the hybridization of Native American, cowboy, shaman, and Two Spirit Being, which he achieves, for example, with depictions of bison in imaginary landscapes. Finally, Noongar artist Laurel Nannup commemorates the 1834 Pinjarra Massacre in her work *Quirriup*, which depicts a woman who was present at the time of the massacre.

Antonio Traverso, in "Looking into the world from somewhere else: mapping and the visualisation of racial violence in Australia," explores "interrelated ideas in postphenomenology of technology and critical studies of visuality, decoloniality and Indigenous knowledges," (217) with brief analytical references to Australian, Chilean and Palestinian films. The research is based on a comparative analysis of the Colonial Frontier Massacres and Deathscapes websites. The Frontier Massacres map is "a project that seeks to dot-mark the occurrence of each historically documented colonial massacre on an online interactive satellite map of Australia within a demarcated timeline: 1788–1930" (218). Similarly, Deathscapes has a section "Saying their names," which aims to name Indigenous victims so that they are not reduced to disembodied and anonymous statistics. But "the objectifying gaze of the aerial map and the virtual globe, which the Frontier Massacres map problematically applies to the representation of Aboriginal massacres, is actively repudiated in Deathscapes' "agonistic immersion into the horror and incommensurable pain of Aboriginal people and asylum seekers inflicted on their incarcerated bodies by the police, medical, legal and government institutions of Australia" (228).

Adrian Stimson, in "Perpetual trauma: witnessing deathscapes of the colonial project," points out that Canada is the country that has denied its genocidal past for the longest time and that despite numerous commissions and reports, very little has been done to address the racism that affects the everyday lives of Indigenous people, what the author, a member of the Siksika First Nation, calls a perpetual state of trauma. His voice on decolonization is artistic, in the form of

painting, performance, installation and sculpture. Since there were an estimated 75 million bison in the pre-contact period, an overarching theme in Stimson's work is the icon of the bison as a symbol of resistance, change, and resilience. One of his performances, *Buffalo Boy*, presents "a campy Two-Spirited Indian Cowboy based on Buffalo Bill and his wild west shows"- "a spectacle, the embodiment of the Wild West; settlers claiming the land, Indian wars, Manifest Destiny, resource extraction and the ultimate genocide of Indigenous peoples" (245). Then there is the installation *Sick and Tired*, which "explores identity, history and transcendence and through the reconfiguration of architectural and natural fragments it exposes colonial history" (246). The installation *As Above So Below*, commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Appin Massacre in New South Wales, Australia, featured beautiful landscapes that preserve the memory of colonial violence. Finally, *Aggressive Assimilation* and *Silent Witness* address the intergenerational impact of Canadian Indian residential schools, i.e., by sitting in silence as an act of resistance to the Colonial Project.

The final, **fifth part**, consists of the poem "After Abolition" by Kyle Carrera Lopez and the editors' afterword titled "Transformative Justice." Kyle Carrero López asks in his poem - how, after abolition, imprisonment, camps and detention cells will be subjected to transformative justice, and how will new life flourish on the ruins of violence. According to the editors, that is the ultimate goal of the Deathscapes project - "the abolition of the racial-prison-industrial-border complex as the governing lynchpin of the settler state" (263). It is a dream to which all the chapters of this book point as they reveal the reality of solidified violence in the form of countless unsolved murders committed by an inexorable settler state and its deadly carceral apparatuses.

Coda

Let us close this magnificent volume of analytical and affective brilliance with the afterword, "Transformative Justice," to the entire volume, in which Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese once again call for urgent action that will transform "the unexpected return of the living dead who refuse to die because of the entrenched intransigence of their colonial systems, with their settler theft of unceded Indigenous lands, racial hierarchies of privilege and subjugation and racist regimes of incarceration and elimination" (258), into a discursive and activist tool for direct transformation.

With this project of Deathscapes, the murderous power of the racial-carceral state is described several times in the book, most notably in its ignorance of "the white overseers who reside outside its lethal structures and who are largely untouched by its agents of racialized violence, even as they continue to fuel its reproduction under the guise of reformism" (260). In other words, the transnational power of these necrocapitalist states has been laid bare, consisting in shared killing techniques primarily through police militarization and surveillance.

Overall, *Mapping Deathscapes: Digital Geographies of Racial and Border Violence* uncovers the actions that led to the deaths of the people mentioned in the various chapters of this book: Indigenous Peoples, Black People, People of Colour, and Refugees caught in the determinable apparatuses of the carceral state that reproduce with confidence "the serial, but never justifiable, embodied figures of 'deaths in custody' or 'deaths at the border'" (262). What preoccupies the editors most is the (im)possibility of Australia's decolonization, for all the criticisms of the reformist and legislative steps taken by the Australian settler state to continue to legitimise its usurpation of Indigenous sovereignty.

Jan TURNER & Albertina VIEGAS

CONTINUOUS BEING – THE ARTWORKS OF MR WARD

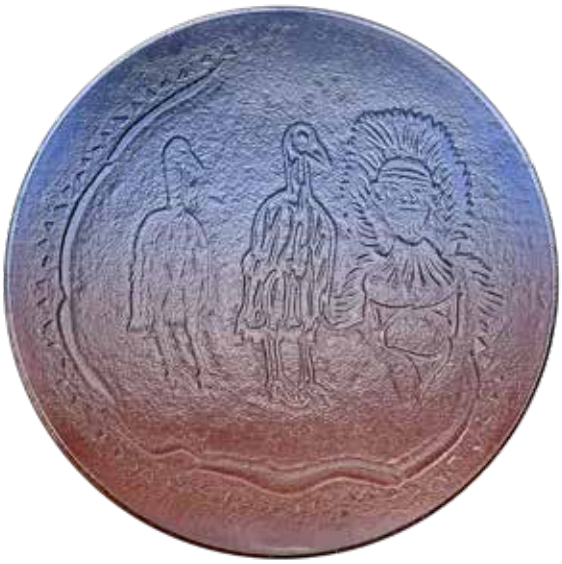

Fig. 1. I am the Nganurti chick, laying down with the spear at *Yankaltjungkul*. Ian Ward, 2001. Photo: C. Maccarlino.

My name is Ian Ward … Yankaltjunku is a Dreaming story of my past but when I was born I was born at a different place in the bush at Rirruwa, no name but close to it. I was born and stamped with the mark (birthmark), it's like a seal or like a branded man, with the tjukurrpa (a physical feature associated with the time of Creation). I am the nganurti (turkey) chick, laying down with the spear at Yankaltjunku.[1]

INTRODUCTION

These are the words that Mr Ward chose to begin his witness statement for an Australian native title legal claim over a substantial proportion of the deserts of Western Australia. It is how he announced his arrival on the earth to strangers in an alien highly prescribed legal process. What did he mean by them?

We came together to write from our shared perspective of having lived and worked for many years with the Ward Family and others at the small desert community of Warburton and the even smaller desert homeland of Patjarr, in

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the far east of Western Australia. We are not writing from the perspective of anthropology or the arts, or as *Yarnangu*[2] (the desert word for humans and pertaining to the local Indigenous cultural world), rather we write and speak from our own experiences of intermingled lives and responsibilities. Wherever possible we have used the words and artworks of Mr Ward to speak for themselves. Our conversation is edited from ten recording sessions made via Zoom between Poland and Australia. We asked permission from Mr Ward's sister Nunykiya/Dorothy Ward, his widow Nancy Donegan and his cousin-sister Daisy/Tjuparntarri Ward. They are always in our minds. As the paper took shape, we recognised how significantly we have been influenced by, guided and are respectful of, two mentors, *Tjamu* (grandfather) Dr John von Sturmer and Dr Marrkilyi "Lizzie" Ellis. We are grateful for the opportunities and encouragement provided by Prof. Suvendrini Perera to express publicly the difficult and often inexpressible.

We explore the challenges faced living in a cross-cultural world for our highly intelligent and sometimes flamboyant friend and colleague, the late Mr Ian Ward, known to us fondly by his nickname, "Ribs". In January 2008, Mr Ward was cruelly left to die, to be "cooked" to death in the back of a prison transport van. A monstrous death and event.[3] In the years immediately preceding his tragic death at 44 years of age, Mr Ward was influential in Ngaanyatjarra society as an emerging cultural leader and as a cross-cultural educator *par excellence*. He was an art-maker, a dancer, a navigator, an orator and most importantly a holder of sacred knowledge, sourced from the *Tjukurrpa* (Creation Time)[4] by an older generation born in the desert who had lived adult lives far from Western contact. Mr Ward was both a conduit of this knowledge to his contemporaries now living in small residential communities on the fringes of mainstream Australian society and to those non-Yarnangu persons with whom he interacted.

This paper has three parts[5]: Pre-Life, as a reference to both Mr Ward's own physical awakening by the spiritual forces that animated him into existence, and to his family living before settler society contact; Life, as a reference to his 44 years on earth; and After-Life, the continuing presence of his identity, his artworks and his voice.

Part 1

Pre-Life: *Parrkangka ngaralanytja* (among the leaves)

Mr Ward was born into the desert rhythms of foot-walking vast distances, of drinking rainwater from shallow clay pans, crevices in rocky escarpments and underground water from hand dug wells and springs, camping beneath the stars, of hunting and gathering foods, of complex cosmological knowledge. Accompanying the rhythms of seasonality were the rhythms of human aggregation and dispersal; at times it was his father, his father's four wives and their several children, whilst there were also times of visiting kin and following the large travelling ceremonial cycles that continue to unite desert families.

People lived according to the rules of conduct laid down in the *Tjukurrpa,* others may call this The Dreaming or Dreamtime. The *Tjukurrpa* was and continues to be central to all Yarnangu lives. It is everything and it is all-encompassing. It is the time when great events occurred as Ancestral Beings travelled, country and cosmos, shaping the geographic features we see today. Through their behaviour they determined how Yarnangu should conduct themselves, live, and care for the country, family and future generations. The Ancestral Beings created social order (and disorder), cultural behaviours (and misbehaviours) and importantly brought forth the languages to be spoken—the telepathic languages, respect languages, sign languages and spoken languages relevant to specific regions. The *Tjukurrpa* is in the past, it is now and it is in the future. It is embodied, literally inside, each person.

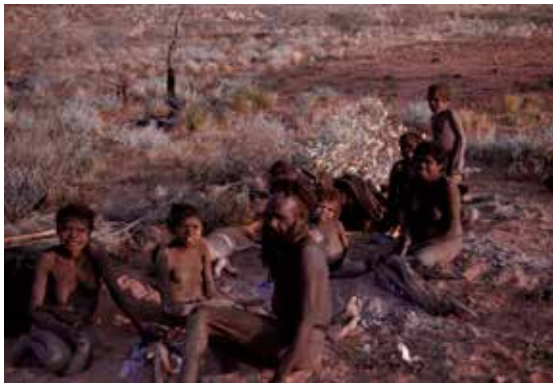


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 2. Ward as an infant with his family of birth: Tjakamarra (father); Manupa, Tjungupi and Pulpuru (mothers and co-wives); Napula and Nunykiya, Ruth, Spencer (some of his siblings). Photo: I. Dunlop, 1965.

Fig. 3. Pulpuru (Mr Ward's birth mother) winnowing seed to make flour with Ward's older brother and Ngurapaya looking on. Photo: R. Gould, 1966.

> *Each person was something before they was born, that is, in a 'pre-life', and this is their totem… You have to be respectful of your individual totem—for example, by not eating it. Should you eat it, it would be like eating yourself and you would become sick because you have been disrespectful to your own totem.*[6]

Desert life, with rhythms that had beat for tens of thousands of years, was irrevocably changed in the mid-1960s by Australia's participation in a British Nuclear Blue Streak Missile testing programme during the nervous years of the Cold War. This remote part of interior desert Australia was directly in what became known as the "Centreline of Fire". Government patrols established a network of tracks probing deep into the deserts seeking to locate Yarnangu and relocate them to permanent settlements.[7]

From the time of his birth Mr Ward was the subject of ethnographic representation. In 1964 Mr Ward's family were taken by vehicle, some 260 kms from the desert to the nearest European settlement, a Christian mission called Warburton. Weeks later they were returned to Patjarr waterhole by the filmmaker Ian Dunlop for the staging of what would become an iconic ethnographic film, *Desert People*.

Upon their return to Warburton Mission, less than a year after their first contact with Westerners, the patriarch of the family was dead and his co-wives paired to different husbands. Mr Ward's family of birth was shattered. With her new husband Wiruny and only some of her children, Pulpuru (Mr Ward's birth mother) returned to the desert on foot. The young Mr Ward was once again on his ancestral lands. At the end of 1966 they were met at Patjarr waterhole by a young American couple, Betsy and Richard Gould who documented their hunter-gatherer lifestyle in great detail.[8] Within a few months, however, there was another, seemingly permanent, relocation to Warburton Mission.

> *We was living with the rockhole and we were happy, everybody getting kuka (meat), and then whitefella came and they want to drop the bomb, bomb, want to drop the bomb in one certain place. All the Yarnangu pirni (desert people) had to shift*

ngurra (camp, home, country) … We came through the testing of the rocket. It was to gather us to the Mission. The whitefella took all the people into the Mission…[9].

In the early 1980s "the northerners", the *kayili* mob, began their journey home, away from the Mission to re-settle at the spiritually significant semi-permanent waters at Patjarr. Families camped with drums of water, replenished from rainwater filled rockholes, and began the arduous task of making a road, in some places where no vehicles had travelled before. They cut the bush with axes, burnt the tree stumps, dragged bushes to clear a "track" or a "cutline". It was an epic undertaking without machinery.

AV: I remember travelling along the old "cutline" which was made between Warburton and Patjarr. Following a line of rockholes, it was a small, intimate road of beautiful passages which allowed one to travel by 4WD/SUV over the country as if by foot. The track hugged around the country and you felt close to the ground. We would bring out "stores", food supplies sourced from the shop at Warburton. Rolls of professional artist quality canvas and acrylic paint were also brought there and a makeshift painting camp was assembled. I remember the priming of unstretched canvases, the mixing of paint in the "hot heat" (greater than 47°C) and the initial coats laid down as background colour. Canvases were laid on the ground with little definition between the edge of the canvas and the earth. Dorothy Ward was helpful in this regard. I remember her helping Ngipi Ward (deceased) with dotting parts of the lower section of the canvas.[10] I, too, was being encouraged to lay down some dots. Being new to experiences of this lifestyle, I was coming to see, the social aspects of painting were integral to the making of the work. These works from Patjarr formed the beginning of the Warburton Arts Collection from the women's and men's sides.

Note: The establishment of the Warburton Arts Project in 1989 by Warburton Community senior law man Stewart Davies,[11] with wife and cultural stalwart Tjingapa Davies (both deceased) and with inaugural coordinator, painter Gary Proctor and later Viegas, was a time of untrammelled possibilities.[12] The Ngaanyatjarra directive in expressing strength and belief in culture was heeded and recorded. Song, dance, performance were seen as attendant activities in support of a painting initiative.[13] So too were camping trips out from the residential Indigenous communities to sacred places, often several hundred kilometres distant that had remained unvisited and unattended for more than twenty years. A rock art painting project, a significant part of Ngaanyatjarra cultural practice, re-emerged. The need to sustain the production of "sacra" and support that activity was seen as important.[14] Men and women's sacra, including paintings on canvas, were kept separate with strict conditions of entry restricted by gender. Alongside painting, the Arts Project took the existing Ngaanyatjarra cultural visual arts, ritual performance and oral values and introduced new technology in the form of recording song and ambient sounds, as well as glass, works on paper, ceramics, fibre works, fashion, photography, film and video, music and multimedia. Artwork productions were displayed publicly in a series of exhibitions and residencies which toured nationally and internationally to great acclaim.[15]

In 2000 the Tjulyuru Cultural Centre opened in Warburton Community and presented a changing exhibition programme based on the lifestyles and cultural expression of the Ngaanyatjarra, and for the first time, to a local Ngaanyatjarra audience which meant careful consideration in curatorial terms of local and direct accountability in Ngaanyatjarra exhibition practice. This constituted a new period of the project's history with attention to commerciality. The Arts Project's foray into the marketplace placed hitherto unknown challenges on artists unused to culture valuations based on their intrinsic worth rather than external market terms. The challenge became how to maintain a viable arts project with cultural integrity in the face of commerciality and the demands of these imperatives.

Part 2

Life: *Ngukunypa/pina yungarra kulirra nyinarra* (living own way by using own brain/ears)

When you look at an art, an object that's an art object or canvas or whatever, when you look at it and you know that Tjukurrpa for that, it takes you to that Creation time, to that sacred time, and that feeling of that sacred time comes through your body, you feel it. Plus, the feelings of your families, that you have seen throughout your life, seeing them practice that tjukurrpa, the going to that place, telling you the story, and dancing those dance for that place and singing the song and design, drawing the designs of those iconographies of that place onto one's body or onto a painting or onto a glass. All those emotions, all combine together, it's all like an infusion, which just comes bursting out. Through. It's a burst of this feeling, that you feel in your body, and it's everything—it's the sacredness, it's the longing for the past, it's the future, it's the now. Future because you have to pass it onto the next generation. It's everything and it's so powerful. People cry when they see that art or seeing that dance, or hearing that story, or hear singing, hearing that song. It's really, really powerful what we have for our tjukurrpa, that's representative in our art (Marrkilyi Ellis, pers. comm.).

JT: Let us begin with his mother and then we can bring Ribs in. Pulpuru is the *Minyma Nganurti,* Mother Turkey, giving birth to her Turkey Chick and he is the *Nganurti* grown to be *Wati Nganurti,* Turkey Man. When we think of *kurntili* (the late Pulpuru, our Aunt and Mr Ward's mother) what would you say?

AV: Industrious, formidable and kind. A force to be reckoned with. Firmly grounded and whose prodigious energy was matched by few. Uninhibited and would try anything she could lay her hands on.

Despite language barriers, she seemed to have no problems meeting and communicating with whitefellas. *Kurntili* made people feel comfortable around her. She spoke about the time when Maramurtu[16] came to their camp for the first time, while she was harvesting and winnowing bush food. She spoke about hearing the sound of the *yurltu* (car) before seeing it.[17] I can imagine her quite gladly showing him the food she had so skillfully gathered and was happily preparing. All in her stride. *Kurntili* took to painting on canvas with ease. Dotting work was unparalleled in the colour cluster roundels she'd created.

"Pretty flower," she would say. The distinctive dot pattern, placement or "phrasing" and the filling-in of the dots was softly, delicately and deftly applied, as if to do so was to walk softly on carpet as it is to traverse over *tali* (sand dunes), *rirra* (pebble plains) or *pila* (spinifex sand plains). There is a habitus and familiarity of gestures in the way she paints, gathers and prepares bush food, lays down seed cake damper in the ashes, hunts and moves through Country. No scale was too big for her. The idea for a group painting to be made by Patjarr women was raised in the early days of the Arts Project when we were based in Patjarr and (Warburton) Ranges. She assured all that there was no need for others and proceeded to commandeer and render a dazzling work in pink of four by two metre canvas by herself.[18] Anyone else could well have been daunted by attempting such a scale.

JT: Yes, *kurntili* was sure of herself and her place in the world. She had enormous cultural knowledge which provided her with the confidence to proceed and to embrace new technologies, new ways of expressing herself. I think of that time in 2002 when all those paintings, large and small, were taken from storage in Warburton and placed on the desert claypan at Mina Mina. Pulpuru said every painting had a song. The ground resounded with the tapped-out song rhythms. Often the artists and the singers' faces seemed distant, as

if they were transported in time and place to the exact locations they had physically experienced in their youth. Families camped together, campfires burned.[19] Pulpuru was a leader, she certainly took centre stage amongst the women.

AV: It was an extraordinary display in self-announcement and self-presentation. Each person seized the moment to speak, demonstrate, broadcast, sing, "perform" their paintings. You felt as if the world was truly full and lived fully, and to bear witness was to be beyond the perimeters of belief. We were inside it.

JT: Pulpuru shared the same embodied spiritual presence, her *nganurti* (bush turkey) with her son and his son. This shared connection from the *Tjukurrpa,* to events in a Creation-making past, at that specific place Yankaltjunku. A place you and I were so privileged to visit. So far distant, so many high sandhills to traverse, no vehicle tracks, following the direction her lips pointed to as she scanned vegetation and chose paths through dense thickets.

That sense of relief when seeing the *rirra,* the plains of small ironstone pebbles, when a car could get to third gear! The vastness of it all and our awareness that there were so few humans in hundreds of kilometres and yet the human presence is tangible. That sense of getting to a rise and looking at the landscape below, looking at the landscape behind and again looking forward to unmapped locations, remembered so vividly by those who had walked this land. Trusting our safe-being to her rememberings.

AV: *Tjamu* (John von Sturmer) writes in the past when people walked the land, the site (mode) of witnessing varied according to whether one was sitting, standing, laying down, travelling,[20] whereas today most people witness the country whilst travelling in a vehicle.

JT: I remember us being at Yankaltjunku so vividly. Stretching out *kurntili*'s four-metre painting on the ground, in the crevice, between the expansive rock formations made in Ribs' words in the epic battle by the Two Bird Men as "they fought, leaving trails of chasms, twisting and turning at every corner, north, south, east, west. They speared and killed each other and today they are lying as two rock formations, the Emu to the north, and Turkey to the south."[21]

When I see this particular art glass disc, I think of him and his sisters and mothers at this specific place, the rituals and the reverence, of how animated and engaged in life and culture everyone was. Ribs was empowered by the spiritual *nganurti* contained within him.

AV: You're kind of inserted into the *Tjukurrpa,* and you relive it, and you keep going… to those places, like those first few instances of dancing, or not even dancing, of sitting down at Patjarr. The late-night dancing and those women, it is almost like you are in a haze. All this would be going on all night, and you are sort of in it but you have no idea. You are in this blitzed out space to take in whatever it is and I feel like that again now. I feel I am approaching from afar, do I have a right to say anything? I'm not there. Even though your spirit, your *kurrunpa,* is there.

JT: I know that feeling. That haziness is us in a transformative space, as we talk, as we reconnect from Poland to Australia, as we remember and ponder, as the emotions rise, we too are entering into a transformative state. It is hazy. It is like being on ritual ground. It's foreign but familiar. It is so breathtakingly familiar and yet it is so completely incomprehensible.

AV: All the more reason to see those pieces, those marks as standing for something, standing for a sign, standing for all those things that are mediated.

> *The Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is part of our Dreamtime stories of our land—holding cultural knowledge and responsibility, holding the common seal on the ground for us. I made the glass so that my background of the land I come from won't fade away. The designs and drawings are part of our home where we come from—beyond the next horizon.*[22]

AV: How to enter the terrain of the glass objects? In the terrain of identity concealed

(von Sturmer, pers. comm.). Impermeable but transparent. A glazed patina. Veiled, sunken. Marks left by the self. Human faces, animal tracks, movement, a trail. Prints, impressions, trapped in a virtual resin. Was it a scene? An event? The body is split between the human body and an animal form. A doubling up. A mirroring. Appearance, reappearance. Self-appearance. A partial revelation. The image I had of them was a watery memory until I actually saw them again on the computer files recently. Their presence, virtually. It has been some time since I last saw them in real life. In the same year that he passed; in the time of the *kuli* (hottest) season, when temperatures can reach 50°C.

It was sometime in 2001. I remember, he would come to the glassworks studio at night after work and in a burst of energy created these Seven Seals designs. And the square glass, *Warnampi* (See Fig. 9). Over a few nights and it was done. The designs were put down in paint, the shapes cut out and then they were fired in the kiln. The sheet glass had slumped into the fibre roll paper templates. The moulds were placed over a fibre blanket layer which lay on top of repurposed metal plough discs. He was pleased with them when they came out of the firing days later after a slow process of annealing.

JT: You make me think of the kiln,[23] of the intense heat, the days of sealed-in cooling, as a crucible of transformation. As the Ancestral Beings, making their way across vast tracts of lands, themselves transformed from human to animal even to stars and planets. I am reminded of the visceral reality of these Ancestral Beings, embodied in individual humans and released in animal form once more upon human death.

AV: A transformation process underway - from human to animal form or is it the other way around? Single figure, dual forms. Sun side, shade side. The "portraits" are centralised. Almost like heraldry armour. Or are they more like self-representations? Is it complementary or opposite? Healthy dog, mangy dog. The *Wati Kutjarra* are virtually identical. The human male heads and animal forms, Dog, Eagle, Perentie (Monitor lizard), are posed one above the other. The horizontal cleaving of the Perentie and Senior Male at midpoint between the wiry hair and sinewy shoulders. The markings of the perentie echoing the wavy form at the bottom. The placement of the mouth, the eyes. The marsupial in flight with an aged male in pursuit hidden among lines and tracks. It is a scene. Are we observing different instances in each narrative?

JT: Marrkilyi writes so evocatively of the *Tjukurrpa*. We use the English word "Songlines" to speak of these routes taken by the Ancestral Beings. As a word it does not convey the great cultural knowledge demonstrated in performance and song, the meta narratives.

> *In that time long ago when nothing existed, these Beings appeared out of nowhere in the form of humans and other creatures. Some beings in the tjukurr [creation] came from opposite directions, met and undertook actions together, whilst others glided past each other with no interaction—perhaps occasionally glimpsing each other, perhaps communicating with each other from a distance. Whilst some travelled together in parallel, others clashed. As these Ancestral Beings traversed time and space, their presence created the features of the environment… These sites became significant as places full of spirituality and sacredness.*[24]

AV: When I've seen him perform, it's like this thing that sort of comes out, it's like when he would splutter things from his mouth, he would be whatever that being, whatever that thing is. It was a total burst over a few nights. He called them the Seals (Super Heroes Series), but I think it is something else operating beyond that. It's him. Doing his thing.

JT: I'm interested in where he got the idea of "seals".

AV: I think it's also coming from, thinking about his role within the Ngaanyatjarra Council.[25] At least that was my understanding. He was taking

on all those roles and in a sense, for me, I saw that those seals were about, it's almost like a whitefella language, these sorts of seals and stamps that he was needing to link into. A way of communicating across to us and to a more outside audience. Often there are people representing Ngaanyatjarra Council, but only he took up things in that way, he himself could only do that.

JT: Yes, when I think of other Ngaanyatjarra political leaders, they kept the *Tjukurrpa* very quiet and operated in a dignified, reserved way in the cross-cultural political sphere. Statesmen. Whereas Ribs is allowing us a brief glimpse of another world. He must have had his reasons.

AV: Using those contemporaneous ideas and technologies. It doesn't matter if it is art glass or singing on a tape so that he had a backing track to perform to in the absence of others/singers.[26] It's just what he did, as an individual. He crafts things from materials or the things he has around him. Like "le bricoleur", it didn't matter if it were glass or he hadn't used it before. Remember him dancing at the opening of the Cultural Centre? How he brazenly danced, turning to reveal a pair of scissors in his mouth, for the Premier of Western Australia to cut the ribbon?

> *At the opening of the Cultural Centre I did the dance for the Wati Kutjarra (Two Men) and Patupirri (Bat). I've studied a lot with the old men and they taught me up about this area that's why I could dance this one.*[27]

In making those Seals it would seem that a position was in a sense granted to him but it was only he that could make those marks and to call them Seals.

JT: Ah. Marrkilyi's translation for "Life"—that desert concept, not of being alive as opposed to dead or non-existent, but rather living in one's own way, using one's own brains, using one's own ears. When I look at the glass I see a depth, with *tjukurrpa* inside. It's like looking at something through water. The *tjukurrpa* is there but you can't quite get to it. It has been revealed but it is also concealed. It is still and yet gently rocked by the human effort involved in holding, it is alive, pulsing with life and I am reminded of Jennifer Deger's writing that the "dappled luminescence of water on an LCD screen can provide Yolngu with a possibility of an experience with the Ancestral".[28]

AV: Almost as if we were looking down into the rockhole itself. He always made it possible for us to know and he did it with such…

JT: Pizzazz and a twinkle in his voice, in his eye, in his movements.

AV: I've been thinking of all those little moments, but to dance in that moment of the Opening, with scissors in his mouth, to dance up to the Premier, it was not only dazzling, it was so breathtaking.

JT: It was true theatre. I remember him with the senior lawyer for Ngaanyatjarra Council, in your yard. He waited before he held aloft the *Warnampi.*[29] Ribs waited for the exact time when the glorious colours of a desert sunset would backlight the glass. Time stopped for we who were watching and listening, allowing us to step through the glass to the *Warnampi,* to the *Tjukurrpa.*

AV: The actual, the real and the virtual. The real image is formed by the intersection of light rays. In the firing process the glass slumps and takes on the shape of the moulds like an after-image and that after-image has a watery misty feature.

JT: Recently, I showed poor quality facsimile paper copies of the Seven Seals to a senior cultural man and a younger middle-aged man and their responses were electric. The older man gasped and became animated. He was looking at something that wasn't glass for him, seeing into the *Tjukurrpa* with an absolute immediacy.[30] The younger man became quite emotional, repeating "this is very, very good. This is very, very good." The next day he tried to educate others of his own personal *tjukurrpa,* and how when he passes away, his *tjukurrpa,* will take animal form and be free. Also present was Daisy, who has used the glass in political protest actions. Tjuparntarri just sobbed, aware she was in the presence of the man himself.

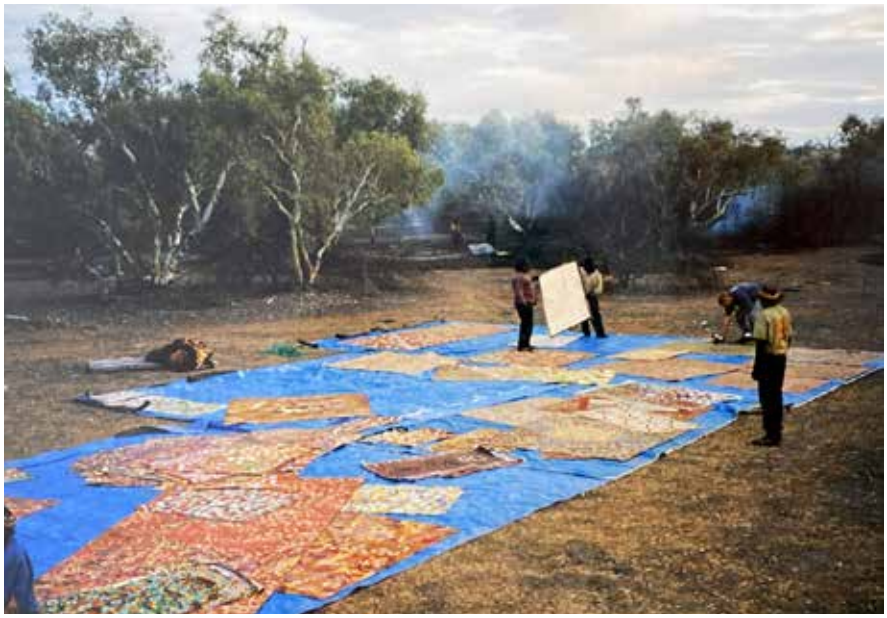


Fig. 4. Paintings from the Warburton Arts Collection on the ground at Mina Mina Claypan, north of Patjarr. Photo: J. Turner, 2002.

AV: It never is just about the past. It's always about the present. Whether it's generational or not, things are always remade. And everything is always updated. If you look at the glass, it has this thing of appearing and reappearing. It becomes and re-becomes what that thing is. Virtual reality—the experience inside via dreams, daydreams, the *Tjukurrpa* working from inside and through external means from storytelling to paintings, film, glass, digital media and to immersive virtual reality technology and the metaverse. Visionary experiences of ceremonial and ritual space, somewhere between dream and reality. I guess that's how the *Tjukurrpa* works. And anybody that has that connection, that recognises it, that's the true self, the true one-self.

JT: I turn back once again to *kurrurntatja*, the spirit beings embodied in individuals. How they are their own agents. Entering and leaving human bodies, precocious, brazen, wilful, their personalities informing that of the human. Captured for a moment in skin, in glass or words but always moving.

AV: I think about people's sense of the visual, like watching Aunty paint a tree, she doesn't stop at ground level. She paints the roots and everything else. Like a rear-view mirror, like a lens pulled right back to see these things. A concept of space in relation to the body that is all-encompassing. A certain perspectival lens.

And if the glass is to be performed. I think about those objects people use when they are dancing. And I think of Mr Fox (deceased) who was dancing near the airstrip at Warburton. Dancing with such force and conviction and everybody cried. He was holding his *tjara* (wooden shield), parrying, stomping. It was so moving, all those old men and women just cried.

JT: Marrkilyi speaks often of objects being "Instruments of Power". Elders from Mr Ward's country are now asking that objects, viewed by the Western gaze as secular, as artefacts, be re-configured, re-imagined as instruments of power, brought into existence in the *Tjukurrpa,* and used in the sacred domain.

AV: Once something is labelled "artefact," it is killed. Do we privilege objects too much, rather than value ephemera, or people? What are these Deathscapes? What are these Afterlives? I think these objects/productions are sacra.

JT: Yes, but by referring to them as Instruments of Power we are concealing, covering ourselves as women from that which cannot be said.

AV: When you are thinking about different styles of representation, and how to do it, whether

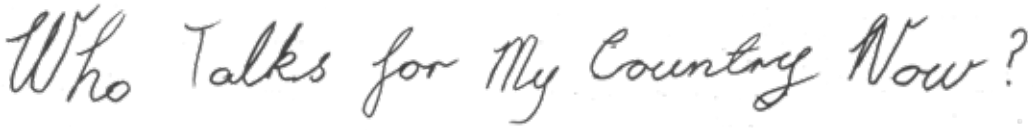


Fig. 5. Handwriting, Ian Ward, 2002.

it be on the body, or a cave or objects, and I think back to those nights that he was making them. What was he thinking of? How was he thinking, communicating this? The fact that we see this pictorial representation going between human and animal form. He is allowing us an in, isn't he? It's for us to see it, that's communicating to us.

JT: He has given us an entrance in, through our own cultural lens, but as Marrkilyi reminded me, his door is only just ajar.

AV: They are emblematic in that specific motifs are chosen. They are in block form, with not too much around. It's almost like strong symbolic forms in order for you to understand it very quickly. They are like a design for a stamp, very large stamps. It goes beyond symbolism. It is him, when he speaks or he does something, when he performs, it goes beyond what he is.

Behind it all there are hidden things. The nature of revelation - what has been revealed but not visible. Such a different approach to making marks.

DEATH, Australia Day 2008, howls of anguish, silence. Coroner's Court. Endless legal enquiries.[31]

AV: How to cite? (See Fig. 5) The words in their original form is a thought text, as spoken thought then becomes a thought image. Part of the Ngaanyatjarra poetic.[32]

It also raises questions around writing in texts such as this—how the witnessing of words, actions, images, ephemera performed are engendered and socialised as are our own roles of seeing, witnessing/looking and knowing. You and I are not impervious. We too have become aware of our own sense of belonging to people and country. The ideas have a reproducibility effect which changes us and our thinking. And makes us present. The *tjukurrpa* is working in us, inside us.

Part 3

After-Life: When the *kuurti/ kurrurnpa* (spiritual essence) remains in country and with families

> *I was right with him, right up … [to when he was arrested], going everywhere, hunting, bringing kuka (meat) for us. Since he passed away, we felt lost and we had nothing. Without him, we had no help, me and my mum and my little brothers. So, we left Warburton. We don't have to stay there anymore. He went everywhere for meetings, talking up for every one of the communities, helping them, going overseas and all. So, one day I might be like him. Talk like a knowledge man and work like him.*[33]

JT: His widow, Daisy/Tjuparntarri and I sat through two weeks of the Coroner's Inquiry, vacating the Court when the evidence became too intense to bear. I remember afterwards, Daisy asked if she could have one of the glass artworks to hold in Perth during the subsequent months of protest. On the steps of the Western Australian Parliament, she held above her head the *Ngarnurti* glass disc to catch the attention of Prof. James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. It was August 2009 and her actions were purposeful as she interrupted his state-sanctioned schedule. When she spoke of Indigenous deaths in custody we were in the

presence of the victim himself. Daisy asked Prof. Anaya to ascend the internal steps of the building to witness first-hand the art-glass panels,[34] designed by Mr Ward's mother Pulpuru, of their shared country, Yankaltjunku. Desert *tjukurrpa* inserted into the very epi-centre of Western governance! In that brief moment mother and son's glass artworks of their shared place Yankaltjunku were united. Sadly, Prof. Anaya's schedule did not permit this. Tjuparntarri felt the Special Rapporteur might understand, "he must know totems", because he was a First Nations American.

One woman trying to invoke justice against the odds. An Indigenous woman, nearly 2,000 kms from home supported by Mr Ward's cousin-brother Mitchell Biljabu (deceased), and our dear Belle Davidson (deceased), another of his mothers. By the time the press photographer took this shot[35] she had lowered the heavy glass disc and was speaking with Prof. Anaya. The image I remember was electrifying as she stood legs apart, elbows locked, holding the glass disc above her, her body extended, enlarged, more grandiose…

AV: On the steps of Parliament House, it's as if Daisy is holding up a satellite dish, the parabolic antenna receiving/transmitting *tjukurrpa* through radio waves.

JT: And again these glass discs channelled the *Tjukurrpa* during all the talk and legal talk about native title. Oh, this hurts. Yes all the *tjukurrpa* criss-crossing the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and yet when it came to the legal determination of native title, a case where Mr Ward had travelled with Brooksie[36] to so many places quietly holding meetings to unify the lands and peoples in a single claim, his own country, the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve could not be included. This exclusion, involving dispossession by the gazettal of national parks and nature reserves, arose from a legal precedent elsewhere in Australia. It brings to mind *Tjamu's* comment on native title: "it merely recognises an extant and long enduring state of affairs. Indeed, it might be seen as a secondary form of dispossession, placing the recognition of law, lawfulness, in the hands of outsiders."[37]

That was the Super Heroes Series for the seven tjukurrpa representing the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve and the Gibson Desert area. It doesn't have a line or fence. All comes through the Gibson Desert down through here (Warburton) and everywhere. Same tjukurrpa going through.[38]

AV: I was thinking about his sister, Dorothy, on the way to the native title ceremony.[39] She had made a series of t-shirts with a couple of young people from the Youth Arts Project (now known as Wilurarra Creative, wilurarra.com.au). She always had this unfettered approach to art making, with a heavy metal edge and there were these flame motifs young people were into which she featured on the t-shirts. There was printed text "GIBSON DESERT NR (Nature Reserve) WE GOT NOTHING" and "ANYWAY IT WAS ALREADY OURS". It was like a social action, sort of felt radical. And mummy, Mrs Giles wore one too.

JT: That same day, when the majority of desert people were celebrating a victory in the Western legal system, Ribs was assisting the most senior of cultural knowledge holders, the late Mr Giles and Mr Fred Ward, both non-English speakers, to sign with a cross a legal document for the Nature Reserve. It was typed in legal English, outlining how future talks with Government would proceed in lieu of the granting of native title. It brings to mind the feelings that Ribs expressed in his "thought text" *Who Talks For My Country Now? Nganalu mantaku kartu warralu watjanma?*[40] The sophistication of his artwork in communicating the foundation of everything, the *Tjukurrpa,* to Yarnangu and non-Yarnangu alike, compared to the incomprehensible legal document.

Of course, governments change and nothing came of that document. A legal challenge was mounted. Albie, I know you were in Poland at this time, but it was as if those years that the *kayili* (northerners) families had been scattered following Mr Ward's horrendous death, were ending. Families came together to present with strength their case that they should be acknowledged as the rightful custodians of the country, taken away from

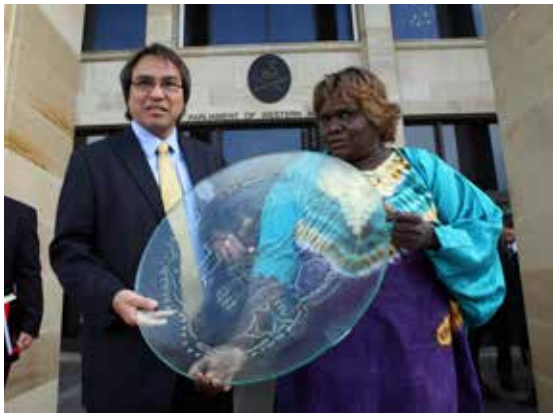


Fig. 6 The Special Rapporteur for the United Nations and Daisy Tjuparntarri Ward holding Mr Ward's glass on the steps of Parliament House, Perth, 2009. Photo: S. Ferrier.

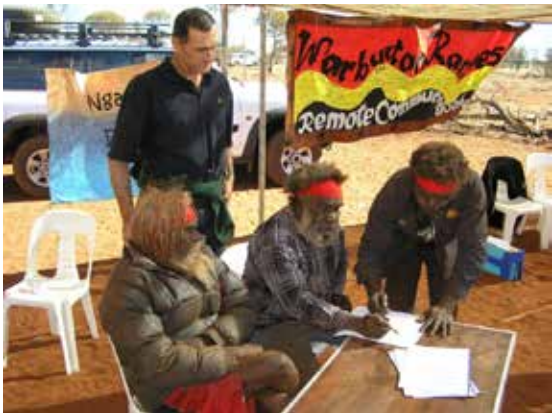


Fig. 7. Mr J. Giles (seated), Mr I. Ward (standing) assisting Mr F. Ward (seated) to place his mark on a legal document for the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve. Mr P. Sharp, Executive Director of Parks looking on. Photo: I. Kealley, 2005.

them by the gazettal of a huge nature reserve, and that they should have been awarded the strongest form of native title available from the Court. For ten days a battle raged: on one side the people, their spiritual allies and counsel, and on the other barristers and solicitors representing both the Australian and Western Australian governments. It was an ontological clash of cultures.

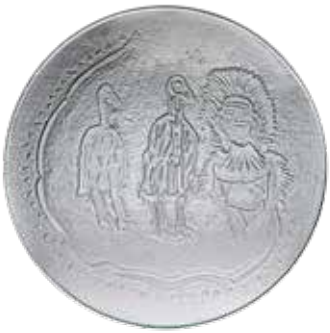
Our *kurntili,* Pulpuru, nearing ninety years, with the confusions and clarities that come from dementia, was ever present. I want to show you this photo of her sitting in the front row of women singers at the Opening Ceremony of the Federal Court. Deger's words resonate: "Old people are far more closely associated with the Ancestral than children are because they have accumulated not only a discursive knowledge of the sacra and their stories but a viscerally charged knowledge and identity that arises from a lifetime of active and embodied mimetic labor directed to a becoming-in-relation-to the Ancestral."[41]

It was Mr Ward's sister Nunykiya who opened the Court proceedings on the day that evidence was heard inside the Tjulyuru Art Gallery in Warburton. I remember she began, as people gathered, even before she was formally sworn in to give evidence. She stood, alone, in front of the *Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands,* her hand gently caressing the Super Heroes, the Ancestral Beings of the land in question. We were reminded that Ribs was present, the *Tjukurrpa* was manifest. In a trial highly choreographed by legal counsel this day was the people's day, where they could move freely and choose the order of presentation. Nunykiya asserted that her brother should have been leading evidence, but for his cruel death. I feel emotional thinking about her singular bravery.[42]

The Ward family is resilient. On the final day of the Federal Court hearing at Mina Mina Claypan, men, women and children, beautifully ochred and painted danced as *Warrmarla* (Revenge Warriors). It was dazzling. It was breathtaking and again it was planned, timed and performed by Yarnangu with no external interference. This is the ephemera that is so lightly considered by the Court, indeed, it was inadmissible as evidence and remains formally unrecorded in the Court proceedings.[43] Albie, all four of Ribs' sons are in the front row lineup. We were all so proud of them. We cried.

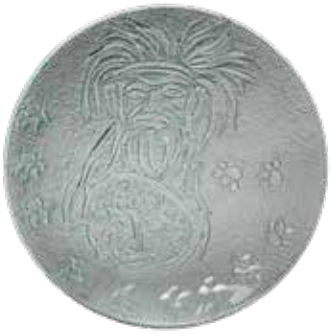
AV: *Ngarltutjarra…* (an expression of compassion)

Seven Seals of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Super Heroes Series)
Ian Ward, born c.1963–2008
diameter 65 x thickness 1 cm, concave clear float art glass discs
Photo: C. Maccarlino
Artworks and text: Ian Ward, 2001



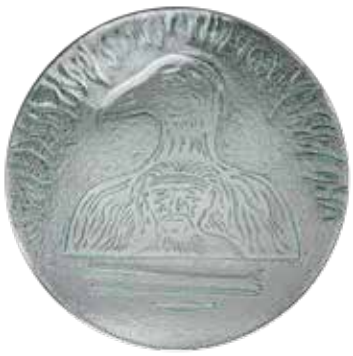
Tjukurrpa Nganurti (Bush Turkey Story)

One day, the mother Emu said to the mother Turkey. 'You know what I did? I killed all my chicks.' And you know, Emu always has lots of chicks, and Turkey, had only one. Mother Emu hid all her chicks away and left one running around and told a lie to the father Emu that mother Turkey had killed all the emu chicks. Father Emu said, 'No, that's not true,' Father Emu came in anger looking to fight, stabbed the mother Turkey in the back of the neck. The father Emu got speared by the father Turkey and there they fought, leaving trails of chasms, twisting and turning at every corner, north, south, east, west. They speared and killed each other and today they are lying as two rock formations, the Emu to the north, and Turkey to the south. That place is called Yankaltjunku.



Tjukurrpa Papa (Dog Story)

There were many dingos living at a place called Kulya. They used to hunt animals, eat and lived a happy life. One day, Two Men were passing through, they came across dog footprints and they said, 'Let's go and see what's inside this cave'. There they found dingos inside. These Two Men killed and ate up half of the dingos, the others escaped to the north-east, to a place called Tjiirtu. There they lived, safe from hunters and there they remain today.



Tjukurrpa Wati Walawurru (Eagle Man Story)

This Eagle Man used to live in the high landmarks. He used to watch over every animal in the land. Every eagle has their boundaries. This eagle always hunts along the high plains of the country. He lived around the Partjatatjarra area in the Gibson Desert. He moves up north and comes down to the south. As he goes higher he draws every place nearer to him, so he can look after them.

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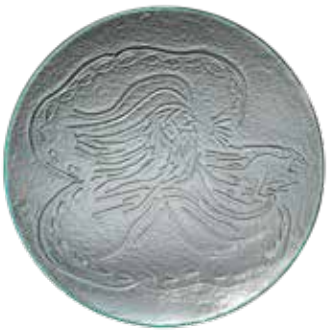
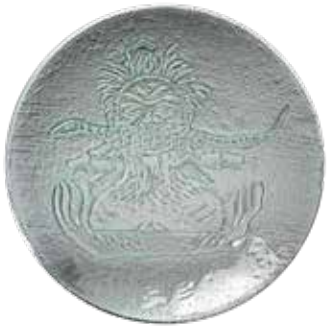


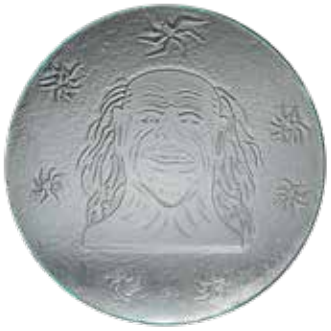
Tjukurrpa Marlu (Kangaroo Story)

This old man Kangaroo has travelled a long journey. He lived with different languages, different cultures, different styles. Every place that he travels through, the language changes, every trail mark he makes, the water flows. Every landmark that he comes to, he is welcomed.



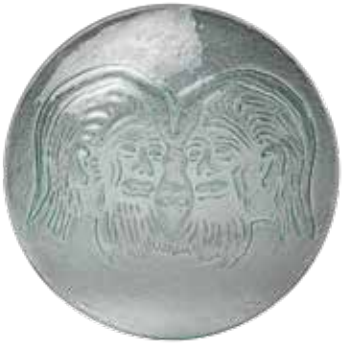
Tjukurrpa Wati Ngirntaka (Perentie/Monitor Lizard Man Story)

There was a Perentie Man (Wati Ngirntaka) who travelled from the top of Western Australia. He came through many places, leaving trails of landmarks wherever he went. On his way southwards, he could see different animals going the same direction as he, and in different directions.



Tjukurrpa Yulanya (Story of Old Man Yula)

This is the old man with the bald head, who travelled many miles chasing seven women across different places, different languages. He lived in a place called Kanamara and for a while they were all there together, ladies and all. Yula was one of the men that wanted those women for his wife but he didn't get them. The women flew into the night sky and became stars [the Pleiades constellation]. Today people perform the dance of Yula. A culture dance which many women do and perform activities representing their home countries and places and respectable ways of looking after the land of the Seven Sisters and Yula. Kurrpulurrpulu we call them [sisters]. It is a really true story. The places, the marks are there, trees are there and lots of dances and performances are still taking place.



Tjukurrpa Wati Kutjarra (Two Men Story)

The boy used to scratch children with his sharp fingernails and make them cry. Their parents would swear at the man and say: "take your boy away. You are not supposed to be living here. You got this angry boy. Take him to another place, we feel uncomfortable." So he took him on a long journey. In all these places he was welcomed. Now the boy was powerful because he had been taught so much: to look after the rain, people. One day he made his way back. It is a Dreaming Story. It is real. Today they exist in their home. His father wants to stop him getting revenge on the people who hated him.

CONCLUSION

JT: How do we speak of Ribs? The liveliness, his swagger, the kerchief tied jauntily around his neck, the twinkle in his eye?

AV: His body, so lithe when dancing**.** His body moved, the *Tjukurrpa* activated, ready for action. The time of transformation. The body, "turned on," changing its status. Poetic shimmer shudder.

JT: Found among the leaves in Pre-Life, fought for, contested and claimed in adulthood. The individual's journey using one's own ears, one's own brain. Released spiritually in death. In so, so many actions, he was, is, the *Tjukurrpa*. The dazzling dance towards the Premier.

AV: Within the Arts Project, he could create a space for himself, a niche that allowed for innovation and performance. In that moment there is an immediacy, it is the moment of now-ness, when a performer loses human form to reveal "the one before", the original creator being. "That one now" becomes "That one … NOW."[44]

JT: Sadly, the Warburton Arts Collection is now at risk of removal from desert Country, from the place of its creation, from families and from cultural authority. It could so easily pass from Ngaanyatjarra control. Perhaps to the State.

AV: All those old people. It can't be for nothing. The *ninti* (knowledgeable) ones. *Tjurtu* (older sister, Tjingapa Davies) was foreshadowing this at my departure. The unspeakable.

JT: The Collection torn from its roots, objectified. How would there be another time when a Tjuparntarri, could raise a glass disc on the steps of Parliament House? When would the *Tjukurrpa* and the man formed of and from *tjukurrpa* ever be demonstrably present again?

AV: His art wasn't an object but rather a production, as events. What's going on in the process? There is a mystery, something exists as an idea– somehow it is converted into a painting or such. Today *Tjamu* said that art, painting, turns structure, the *Tjukurrpa,* into commodities. Commerciality destroys history. This history assaults structure and it is hard to fight history.

JT: I'm reminded of Marrkilyi's profound words: "Our objects are not artefacts. They are simultaneously sacred and everyday. They are Instruments of Power".

AV: *Tjamu* was raising how wanting everything, objectifying everything creates an objective universe dependent on conflict/claiming which then is part of history.

JT: History, the individual's Life, lived by one's own senses, lived respectfully yet vitally pushing ahead to claim, to claim a knowledge, a place. Are we saying that history hovers in a state of tension with the *Tjukurrpa?* Marrkilyi's revelation to me is that *tjukurrpa* is THE Yarnangu organisation.

AV: In preparing this paper, each of us furthering our discussions with *Tjamu* and Lizzie has been humbling. How generous they are to share ideas long known by them.

This isn't just about bringing the past (tradition) into the present. Rather, the present reveals that what was claimed in the past is indeed possible: 'See, we can see with our own eyes, we were not just making this up.' The present appearance – revelation – shows what was always possible.[45]

JT: Ribs, with his flamboyant, regional vision, cross-cultural skills, was somewhat of a maverick, but arguably one of the best communicators of his time. It is not enough to create paintings or artworks alone. The risk is that artworks become avatars for the real experience of *tjukurrpa* and without human ephemera the country withers. To be with others in specific named places, to live, to visit, to dance, to sing, to drink from the water sources, to sleep with the constellations. Those creative directors of the Warburton Arts Project were *ninti,* they knew this.

Albie, do we dare to speak here of the unspeakable?

How do we speak the unspeakable? How do we say of one who has moved from a fundamental world footwalking through country, from rockhole to rockhole, with families as was done for so so many

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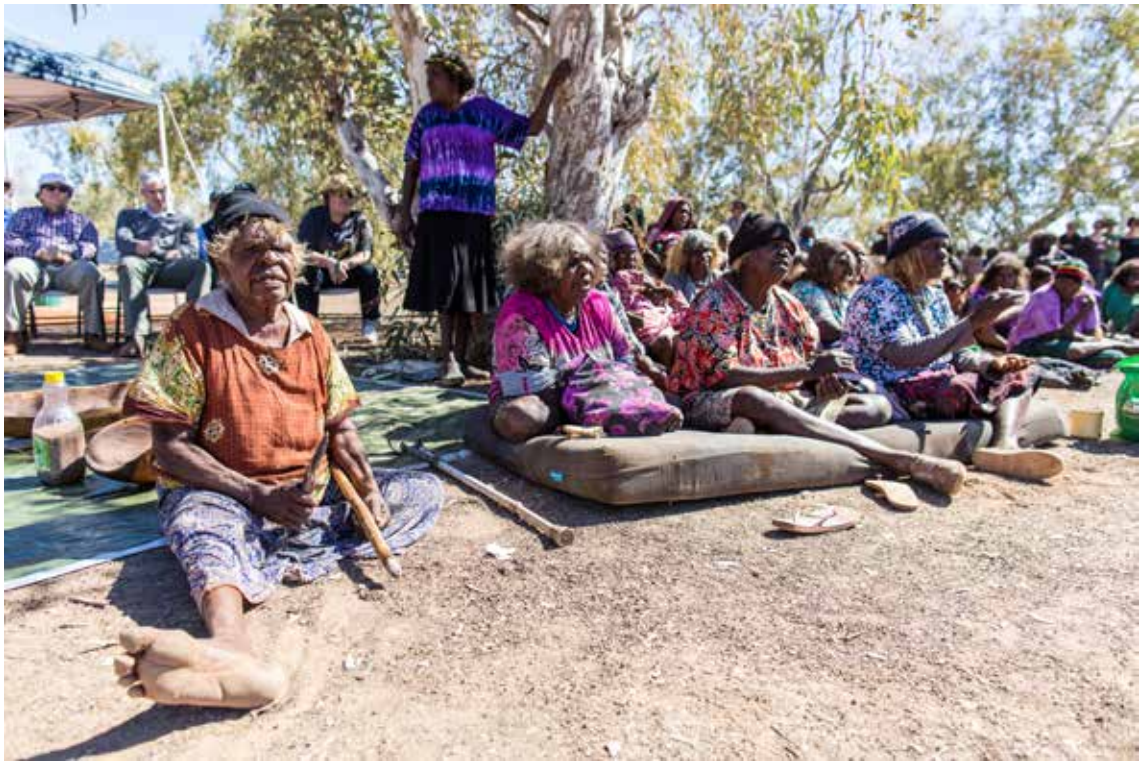

Fig. 8. Mr Ward's mother Pulpuru (left) at Mina Mina with women singers at the Opening Ceremony for the Federal Court. Sister Nunykiya/Dorothy Ward (standing). Photo: J. Thomas, 2014.

years before, then ruptured to another world of mission life, outcast and on the fringes, and then becoming a leader and spokesperson, mentor & friend to staff, teacher and guide to scientists of all kinds? A man of law, a song man who had a vision for his families and country. And always speaking for country and reminding us all of the proper ways of respecting people and country. But does this matter when Yarnangu and all Aboriginal peoples throughout history are always the subject of the unspeakable? From chains to prisoner transportation, what has changed?[46]

JT: As we write Australians are debating the Voice to Parliament, whether Indigenous Australians should have a formalised structure to engage with law-makers. How can we be debating this in 2023?

AV: It is so overdue. Ribs sought recognition. He was so intent on inserting himself at everything.

JT: His ongoing challenges to the existing political *status quo*.

AV: What is shocking is that he was so available. And now he isn't. Only in the shock of that death (von Sturmer, pers. comm).

JT: How can a man of culture, of extraordinary intellect, be reduced/reframed as a criminal by the State?

Fig. 9. Ian Ward holding his artwork at Warburton. *Wati Warnampi* (Watersnake Man). Ian Ward, 2001. clear float art glass panel
91 x 89.5 x 1 cm
Photo: E. Brites, 2003.

Fig. 10. Mr Ward's family, including his four sons and sister, preparing to dance the Warrmarla (Revenge Warrior) Dance at the Closing ceremony for the Federal Court, Mina Mina Claypan. Photo: J. Thomas, 2014.

With our memories we conjure into being the past, the person and the *Tjukurrpa* - that state of continuous being. Let's breathe and finish with Ribs' *Wati Warnampi,* the Watersnake Man, provider of life-giving water, obtained from soaks and wells in the driest of times, resident at the site where he first saw a light-skinned human and what a cross-cultural journey that began…

> *It's a place called Patjarr, one of the communities that is in the Gibson Desert Nature Reserve. You can see the design representing many soakwaters. He came across and performed many waterholes and soakwaters and moved on to a place called Tartja, north of the Clutterbuck Hills.*
> *He put them through, ladies and men, performing rain dance, making rain. He used to give us water, look after us in the heat, dry water place. The soak now lies there today with plenty of water in it. When I was living at Tartja, it was my first communication with Europeans. I saw them coming over the sandhills. So I thought to myself, I might as well make a design of that place where I first saw a European.*[47]

We offer a caveat: One has to be cautious rendering Aboriginal thought or categories, as nothing is even vaguely familiar in the Western world (von Sturmer, pers. comm). As Marrkilyi reminds us, the door to *Tjukurrpa* and *"tjukurrpa* thinking" can only ever be opened slightly. In our grief we bear the consequences of our positions.

Notes

[1] Ian Ward in Jan Turner, *Visual Material and Selected Preliminary Draft Witness Statements*, The Peoples of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Vol. 7, report tendered to Federal Court of Australia [WCD2005/002] (Alice Springs: Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004), 7.

[2] We are using the standardised Ngaanyatjarra orthography for all desert language terms.

[3] Rangi Hirini, "'Cooked' to Death: Ten Years after Shocking Death in Custody, Has Anything Changed?" NITV, 31 January 2018, https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/cooked-to-death-tenyears-after-shocking-death-in-custody-has-anything-changed/ fsgf3aujw.

[4] *"Tjukurrpa"* refers to the Creation Time when a code of living, a system for desert culture was laid down for all forthcoming generations. We use *"tjukurrpa"* to refer to instances where the Tjukurrpa is revealed and made visible/known to humans.

[5] We thank the Ngaanyatjarra linguist Dr Marrkilyi Ellis for her translations of these headings and her confirmation that there is no Yarnangu concept of an Afterlife. We refer the reader to her biography: Lizzie Marrkilyi Ellis, *Pictures from My Memory: My Story as a Ngaatjatjarra Woman* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2016), and to Inge Kral and Elizabeth Marrkilyi Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives: Wangka kutjupa-kutjuparringu – How Talk Has Changed in the Western Desert* (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2020).

[6] Marrkilyi in Kral and Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives*, 17.

[7] Jan Turner, "The View from Below: A Selected History of Contact Experiences, Patjarr, Gibson Desert, Western Australia," in "Culture Contact in Indigenous Australia," ed. Amy Roberts and Daryl Wesley, special issue, *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 42 (December 2018): 13–47.

[8] Jan Turner, "Dr Cool and his Leading Lady: The legacy of the Goulds' work at Patjarr," in "Chasing the Rain: The Western Desert as a Marginal Environment," ed. Paul Monaghan, special issue, *The Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 45 (December 2021): 41–73.

[9] Ian Ward, in Jan Turner, ed., *trust* (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project Press, 2003), 1. Exh. cat.

[10] *Wanarmpi Tjalpu-tjalpu*, 1991, Warburton Arts Collection #WAC15(L).

[11] Stewart's "father" Wiruny was Mr Ward's mother Pulpuru's second husband.

[12] For an erudite discussion on art, ritual performance, aesthetics and the Aboriginal lifeworld in a Warburton Arts catalogue, see John von Sturmer, "Devotedly Yours," in *Yarnangu Ngaanya: Our Land Our Body*, ed. by Gary Proctor (Perth: Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts Press, 1993): 83–89. Exh. cat.

[13] Gary Proctor, "The Project," in *Yarnangu Ngaanya: Our Land, Our Body*, ed. Gary Proctor (Perth: Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts Press, 1993), 78–81. Exh. cat.

[14] 2002 Ngaanyatjarra Arts Strategy. Internal document, Warburton Arts Project. A considerable heritage collection was gathered with enormous community support and resources. It is believed to be the largest collection of community controlled Aboriginal art in Australia. Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku, "Tjulyuru Cultural and Civic Centre," accessed 2 April 2023, https://www.ngaanyatjarraku.wa.gov.au/tourist-information/attractions/tjulyuru-cultural-and-civic-centre.aspx.

[15] Victoria Laurie, "From Warburton to China: The Aboriginal Art Exhibition Taking China by Storm," ABC, 25 August 2011, https://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2011/08/25/3302242.htm; Victoria Laurie, "Cracking China," Scoop, 25 June 2014, https://scoop.com.au/cracking-china/.

[16] Walter MacDougall was appointed a Native Patrol Officer by the Commonwealth Department of Supply to contact and safeguard the interests of Aboriginal people during the rocket tests. His name "Maramurtu" refers to his damaged hand (mara-murtu hand-short).

[17] Pulpuru Davies in Vikki Plant and Albie Viegas, eds., *Mission Time in Warburton: An Exhibition Exploring Aspects of the Warburton Mission History 1933–1973* (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project Press, 2002), 26. Exh. cat.

[18] *Yankaltjunkunya*, 1991, Warburton Arts Collection #WAC 039 (L). Partially represented in Figure 4.

[19] This three-day camp allowed artists to present their artwork, held in the Warburton Arts Collection, to their extended families. As artists revealed their own paintings, men and women sang the songs associated with the specific *tjukurrpa* depicted (Songlines and Song cycles). The event was filmed by Brites, Perry and Janicki for the Warburton Arts Project.

[20] In desert languages, all objects are said to be laying, sitting or standing.

[21] Both bird species are found only in Australia.

[22] Ian Ward, Untitled and unpublished manuscript (Warburton: Warburton Arts Project, 2001).

[23] In 1995, three kilns including a large kiln were installed in Warburton and in 1996 artists began making artworks in slumped glass for the architectural and domestic markets. Gary Proctor, "Warburton Arts Project," in *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, ed. Sylvia Kleinhert and Margo Neale (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000), 731–732.

[24] Marrkilyi in Kral and Giles Ellis, *In the Time of Their Lives*, 15.

[25] The legally incorporated body that represents the Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara and Manytjiltjarra

speakers who together are its members and live on what has now become known as the Ngaanyatjarra Lands of Western Australia. Information regarding the political context of the times is explained in the following section.

[26] A reference to Mr Ward's trip to China, as a representative of Australia, to educate an international audience about Indigenous land management practices. On this occasion he performed a traditional dance to pre-recorded music, emphasising that desert views on contemporary land management practices could not be divorced from the Tjukurrpa.

[27] Ian Ward, recorded by Chris Perry in a Research File Note for the Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004.

[28] Jennifer Deger, *Shimmering Screens: Making Media in an Aboriginal Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 225.

[29] Glass artwork, see Figure 9.

[30] See Deger, *Shimmering Screens*, chapter 4; Fred R. Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 9.

[31] Jan Turner, "The Impact of a Life (and a Death): Colonial Encounters and Aboriginal Desert Practices," interview with Léopold Lambert, in "The Desert," ed. Léopold Lambert, special issue, *The Funambulist*, no. 44 (November–December 2022): 48–57.

[32] Created for the *trust* exhibition. Turner, *trust*.

[33] Tyrone Ward, Statement prepared for inclusion in a Deaths in Custody permanent exhibition space at Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip (2020).

[34] These panels were commissioned pieces, created as part of the Warburton Arts Project to be incorporated into internal and external walls and doors.

[35] The rights to republish the photograph in the journal and online were acquired from ZRC SAZU, Institute of Philosophy, Ljubljana, Slovenia.

[36] Dr David Brooks, lead anthropologist for the Ngaanyatjarra Lands native title claim.

[37] John von Sturmer, "Preface," in *Before Time Today: Reinventing Tradition in Aurukun Aboriginal Art*, ed. Sally Butler (St Lucia Qld.: University of Queensland Press, 2010), 18. Exh. cat.

[38] Ian Ward, in Chris Perry, File Note, One Claim (2005).

[39] Ngaanyatjarra Lands Native Title Determination ceremony, 2005.

[40] The linguist Marrkilyi notes Mr Ward's use of the continuous/never-ending tense.

[41] Deger, *Shimmering Screens*, 78.

[42] 23 August 2014 Federal Court proceedings (WAD86/2012).

[43] These photographs exist because it was not considered formal evidence.

[44] John von Sturmer, "To Dance in the Theatre of Absence: Some Remarks about Aurukun Carvings," in *Brought to Light II: Contemporary Australian Art 1966–2006*, ed. Lynne Seear and Julie Ewington (South Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2007), 410-419.

[45] von Sturmer, "To Dance in the Theatre of Absence."

[46] John von Sturmer and Albertina Viegas, "In Memory of Mr Ward," event text as part of the installation *Too Many, Too Few, Not Enough*, Mori Gallery, Sydney, Australia (28 July – 2 August 2009). See also "Deathscapes" case study on Mr Ward and the discussion on "necro-transport."

[47] Ian Ward, in Jan Turner, *Visual Material and Selected Preliminary Draft Witness Statements*, The Peoples of the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Vol. 7, report tendered to Federal Court of Australia [WCD2005/002] (Alice Springs: Ngaanyatjarra Council, 2004), 9.

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Jan TURNER

for thirty years the Ngaanyatjarra and Manytjiltjarra people have generously educated and included Janet's family in their own family networks. As an anthropologist and film-maker, Turner continues to support Yarnangu visions for their future. Together they have travelled deep into desert country. She is currently a PhD student at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia.

Albertina VIEGAS

a long-established installation and performance artist and curator based in Bydgoszcz Poland since late 2010. A child and activist of Timor-Leste, her work operates between different geographies, histories, languages and social settings. Viegas was art adviser to the community-based Warburton Arts Project (1989–2008) and currently arts adviser to Mózg Foundation (Fundacja Muzyki Współczesnej i Form Interdyscyplinarnych / Foundation of Contemporary Music and Interdisciplinary Forms).

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