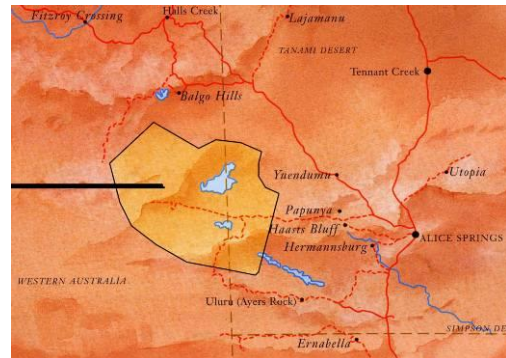


Pintupi



The remarkable paintings of the Pintupi are generally aerial-view landscapes often on a scale that reflects the vastness of their Country. These paintings map not only the physical landscape, but also spiritual elements associated with the landscape and the ways in which the two interact.

The Pintupi, a hunting-and-gathering people of Australia's Western Desert, were among the last Indigenous people to come into contact with white society. Despite their extended relocation in central Australian settlements, they have managed to preserve much of their traditional culture and social organization. Indeed, the Pintupi lands are so remote that only as recently as 1984 a family group of nine Pintupi speakers walked out of the desert into the small community at Kiwirrkurra just inside the Western Australian border. These people had lived a traditional life completely unaware of Western Culture. When they walked into the 20th century, they brought with them intact Dreamings and lore that stretched back tens of thousands of years.

When young Pintupi men came in from the desert they brought with them a tradition of Dreamings not widely seen before. This tradition has been carried forward, and now the paintings of these men demonstrate the powerful role that the Tingari Cycle and traditional law played in the lives and knowledge systems of the desert people. The Tingari are a group of senior men and initiated novices from the Creation Era whose travels and ceremonies provided a blueprint and common identity for desert dwelling Pintupi people.

The mysterious Tingari Cycle Dreaming is a creation story that refers to a group of ancestral elders who embarked upon periodic epic journeys through vast tracts of the Gibson/Western Deserts. As they travelled, they performed sacred and mystical rituals which opened up new land. The adventures of these Tingari groups are enshrined in numerous song and painting cycles which still inform the Pintupi people today.

"The first people were created out of the Tingari Dreaming. They appeared out of smoke. When they arrived, they were already grown men with beards," says Benny Tjapaltjarri.

With no written language, the songs and paintings of the Tingari Cycle form an integral part of the 'passing down' of the ancient laws, Dreamings and Culture to the next generation of initiates known as the Punyunyu. The Pintupi were a mainly nomadic people who wandered over incredible distances from west of Lake MacKay in Western Australia to just east of Kintore in the Northern Territory.



A: 47 High Street, Fremantle Western Australia, 6160
P: 61-8 9335 8265
E: info@japingka.com.au
W: www.japingka.com.au



Pintupi Area continued p 2

“One of the most miraculous events in Australian culture was the ‘invention’ of contemporary Aboriginal art in the small artificially created settlement of Papunya, some 250 kms west of Alice Springs. The story is well known: encouraged by the young art teacher Geoffrey Bardon, a number of senior Pintupi, Anmatyerre and Arrernte men put forward designs for a mural to be painted on the Papunya Special School in 1971. The aim was, as they later put it, to ‘show the children the stories of our culture, what our grandfathers taught us’. The result, grandly developing over the next 30 years, was the so-called Western Desert Painting movement, spoken of today by many commentators as fully the equal of those European artistic movements, Impressionism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.” (Rex Butler, Exhibition Catalogue for “Unforeseen 2002”, Fireworks Gallery Brisbane.)

The late Robert Hughes, famed art critic, called the desert painting movement “the last great art movement of the 20th Century”. The great works of Western Desert Painting are well known today, having achieved by now well-nigh iconic status. The Pintupi artists have created some of the most distinctive works of the Western Desert tradition.



A: 47 High Street, Fremantle Western Australia, 6160
P: 61-8 9335 8265
E: info@japingka.com.au
W: www.japingka.com.au

