



Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula

(Australian, 1938 - 2001)

Straightening Spears at Ilyingaungau #261

Acrylic on canvas
182 x 91 cm / 71.7 x 35.8 inch

ABOUT

This work by Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula is of the type that is considered his most important and most influential. His first Straightening Spears at Ilyingaungau was painted in 1990 and is widely considered his masterpiece. The minimalist work of lines of linked dotting in red, ochre and various shades of yellow ochre, whose subtle modulations of line and tone evoked for mainstream audiences the quintessential desert landscape. We easily recognize the spears, but also a striking vertical rock formation at this particular site, might have been in the artist's mind when he created the original.

BIOGRAPHY

(Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula)



Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula was born under a tree along a river bed approximately eight kilometers east of Haasts Bluff, Northern Territory. Turkey's father was Toba Tjakamarra, an Emu man from the area around Lake MacDonal and Walunguru, present day Kintore. After Turkey's birth, his family continued living in the bush, though they spent most of their time around the Lutheran mission of Haasts Bluff. When they began building the settlement at Papunya and work became available, the family finally came out of the bush and settled in Haasts Bluff. As a young man, Turkey worked as a stockman. His outfit was his trademark: a cowboy shirt, hat and boots. Turkey Tolson was one of the youngest original shareholders of the Papunya Tula Artists collective. He started painting in the early days of Geoffrey Bardon. Turkey was chairman of Papunya Tula from 1985-1995. Turkey painted Bush Fire, Emu, Snake Woman and Mitukatjiri Dreamings, which originated from his traditional territory south-east of Kintore. Turkey was known as an innovative painter and experimented with various figurative styles, in addition to the strict, traditional Pintupi style of circles and connecting lines with which he became known during the first twenty years of his artistic career.

EXHIBITIONS

Selected exhibitions:

- 2013-2014: 'Vivid Memories - An Aboriginal Art History', Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, France
- 1995: 'The Twelfth National Aboriginal Art Award', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
- 1993: 'The Tenth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
- 1993: 'Tjukurpa, Desert Dreamings, Aboriginal Art from Central Australia (1971-1993)', Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
- 1993: 'Aboriginal Art Exhibition', Kung Gubunga, Oasis Gallery, Broadbeach, Queensland, Australia
- 1992-1993: 'The Heritage of Namatjira', touring exhibition through Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, Australia
- 1992-1993: 'New Tracks Old Land: An Exhibition of Contemporary Prints from Aboriginal Australia', touring USA and Australia.
- 1992: 'The Ninth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
- 1991: 'Canvas and Bark', South Australian Museum, Adelaide, Australia
- 1991: 'The Painted Dream: Contemporary Aboriginal Paintings from the Tim and Vivien Johnson Collection', Auckland City Art Gallery and Te Whare Taonga o Aoteroa National Art Gallery, New Zealand
- 1991: 'Central Australian Aboriginal Art and Craft Exhibition', Araluen Centre, Alice Springs, Australia
- 1991: 'Flash Pictures', National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
- 1990: National Gallery of Modern Art, Rome, Italy
- 1990: Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne.
- 1989: 'Mythscapes, Aboriginal Art of the Desert', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
- 1989: Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, Australia
- 1988: 'The Fifth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
- 1988: 'Papunya Tula Paintings', Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga, Australia

- 1987: 'The Fourth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
1987: Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, Australia
1986: Roar Studios, Melbourne, Australia
1985: 'The Second National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition', Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
1985: 'The Face of the Centre: Papunya Tula Paintings 1971-1984', National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
1985: 'Dot and circle: a retrospective survey of the Aboriginal acrylic paintings of central Australia', Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia
1984: 'Koori Art 84', Art Space, Sydney, Australia
1983: Mori Gallery, Sydney, Australia
1983: Roar Studios, Melbourne, Australia
1982: Brisbane Festival, Brisbane, Australia
1982: Georges Exhibition, Melbourne, Australia
1981: Anvil Art Gallery, Albury, Australia
1977: Nigerian Festival Exhibition, Lagos, Nigeria?
1974: Anvil Art Gallery, Albury, Australia

COLLECTIONS

- Artbank, Sydney.
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth.
Berndt Museum of Anthropology,
University of Western Australia.
Darwin Supreme Court.
Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide.
Museum of Victoria, Melbourne.
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.
Sails Collection, Sails in the Desert Hotel, Yulara Complex,
Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park.
South Australian Museum, Adelaide.
The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth.
The Kelton Foundation, Santa Monica, U.S.A.
Victorian Centre for Performing Arts, Melbourne.