

fine art market

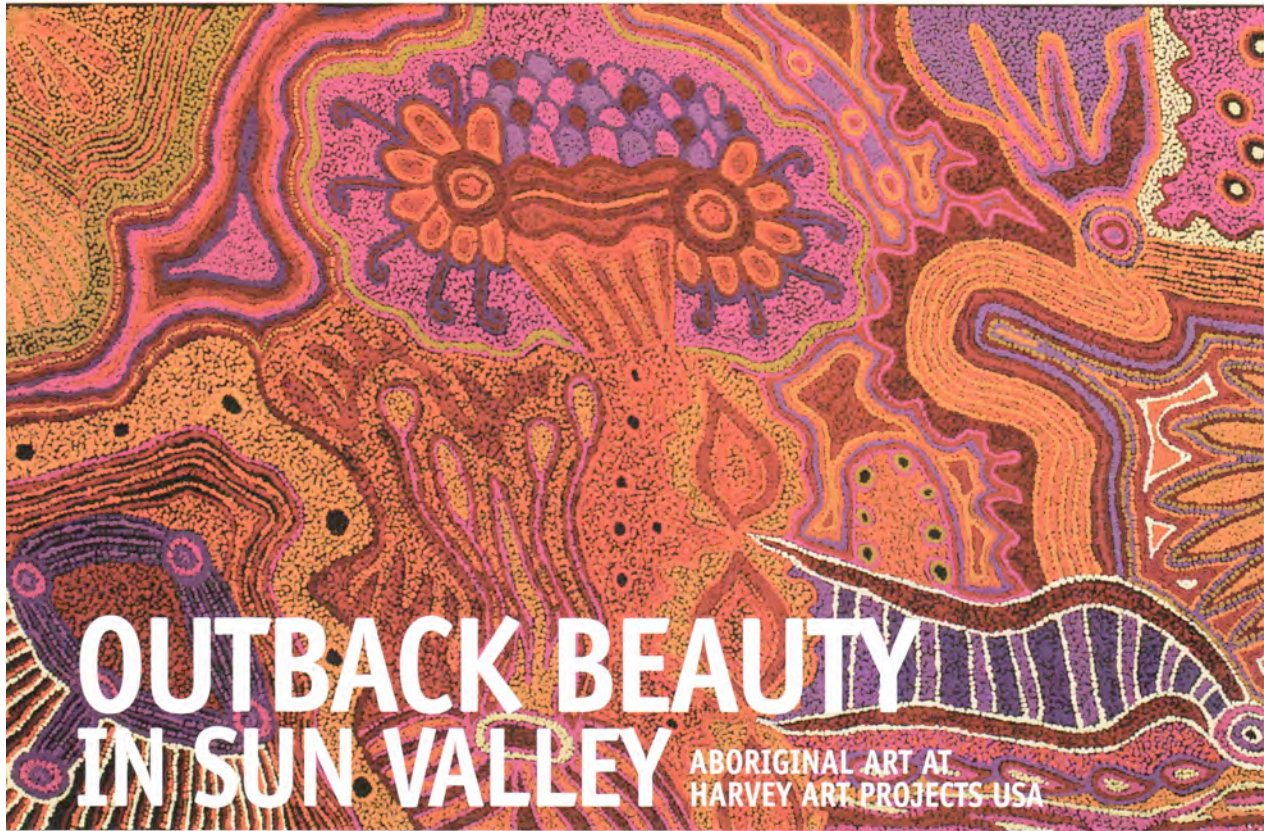


PHOTO: COURTESY OF HARVEY ART PROJECTS

Native Australian Julie Harvey has established her gallery, Harvey Art Projects USA, as one of the foremost exhibitors and retailers of contemporary Australian aboriginal art in the Pacific Northwest. Harvey Arts Project opened its doors only a few years ago with works from Julie's homeland, introducing the Sun Valley audience to an entirely new genre of artwork.

BY SABINA DANA PLASSE

Harvey Art Projects is dedicated to developing cultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the finest aboriginal art through regular exhibitions and in-house and satellite events. Aboriginal art is Australia's leading contemporary art movement, yet its origins are derived from the oldest continuous artistic tradition known to man. From its humble beginnings as a cultural movement in the early 1970s, Aboriginal art continues to sustain an important world culture and also plays a vital role in the perseverance of the Aboriginal culture.

It's not only the color and design in Aboriginal art that captures a viewer's attention (although the impact is captivating)—on the contrary—the visual display is only part of the art. Upon further inquiry or just plain curiosity, Australian Aboriginal art tells a vast story about a culture whose entire heritage, folklore,

ancestry, and future exist in every work created by a unique Aboriginal artist. And it's not an easy culture to access. "It's a small community of people," Julie explains. "Trust is key and people have no idea. You cannot just turn up at an arts center in Australia and buy a painting. It's nearly impossible to get there, and you have to be invited. It's humbling being part of this. I work for these artists; I need to be responsible, and do the best possible job for them. You have to go and spend time with them, which they very much appreciate."

It's as if there no beginning or ending to these paintings. They are symbolic of deep-rooted cultural values and understandings, which are passed on to new generations through the teachings of elders. Julie has long immersed herself in the Aboriginal traditions and has earned the trust and respect of the communities

Tjunkyaya Tapaya, *Kungkarangkalpa Attila*, acrylic on canvas, 59 x 39 inches, Ernabella Artists #650-12.

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Dickie Minyintiri, *Wati Ku Inma Tjurkupa*, acrylic on canvas, 71 x 47 inches, Ernabella Artists #572-12.

with which she works. And even though the Aboriginal world is tight-knit and remote, Julie has brought numerous exhibitions, painters, films, scholars, and ceremonial teachings on Australia's vast and fascinating Aboriginal art world to Sun Valley since she first opened her doors on First Avenue in Ketchum. Harvey Art Projects is the exclusive representative of Papunya Tula Artists in the US and represents several highly regarded art centers in Australia.

This February's exhibition at Harvey Art Projects is from the Aboriginal artists of the Ernabella Arts Center. Established in 1948, Ernabella

Arts is Australia's oldest indigenous art center located in the Pukatja community at the eastern end of the Musgrave Ranges in far northwest South Australia. "Ernabella Arts started as a mission," says Julie. "They have an interesting history of ceramics as well as using wool, native animals, and fibers making sculpture and fiber art. In a way, it's a little like multimedia. Painting was secondary to the ceramics at this center, which is unusual. Normally, most desert art centers are about painting."

A true gem at Ernabella Arts Center is painter Dickie Minyintiri. Dickie was born in Pilpirinyi,

"When an old man starts to paint and picks up a brush, it's usually an incredible moment because they are so filled with wisdom and knowledge."

Western Australia near the border with South Australia around 1915. He is a highly respected ngangkari (traditional healer) and senior lawyer although he has retired from practicing. Dickie is the oldest man in Ernabella and one of the most senior living in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands or APY Lands, at about 96.

"He only paints about two paintings a year," tells Julie. "When an old man picks up a brush and starts to paint, it's usually an incredible moment because they are so filled with wisdom and knowledge. These men understand how everything works in a profound way. It all pours out onto the canvas."

Dickie began painting at Ernabella Arts in late 2005. His work has a strong, raw edge that tells the story of his life in pre-contact times, his position in ceremony, and how ceremonies are used to protect the ancestral beings of his country—the rock wallaby, kangaroo, euro,



Ernabella Artists from left Pantjiti Lionel, Tjariya Stanley & Niningka Lewis.

ERNABELLA ARTS CENTER

Pukatja is the oldest permanent settlement on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, APY Lands. The first craft products were produced in the craft room of the mission, now the Ernabella Arts, opened by the Presbyterian Board of Missions in 1937. Initially used as a means of engaging women in meaningful work, the hand-loomed woven fabrics, hand-pulled and knotted floor rugs with their unique patterns became known back in the 1950s as Ernabella's signature design, Ernabella walka or anapalayaku walka.

In addition to the Pukatja community, the art center services David Well, Black Hill, Turkey Bore, New Well, Youngs Well, and Balfours Well. Through its 60-year history, Ernabella artists have worked across a wide range of mediums including ceramics, silkscreen printing, batik, painting, weaving, and punu.

The members of Ernabella Arts have evolved into a culturally strong contemporary art center. Works by the center's artists have been acknowledged in national art prizes such as the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Art Awards and have been collected by public institutions nationally and internationally. Ernabella Arts is an Aboriginal-owned and -run corporation, which promotes and supports ethical practice in the creation and sale of indigenous art.



Ernabella Artists

of South Australia

Ceremonial Opening Performance
with visiting Guest Artists
Friday 15 Feb 6.30pm Gallery Walk

Special Film Screening
& Artist Chat
Saturday 16 Feb 4pm The Community Library

HARVEYARTPROJECTS.COM

Gallery located at 391 First Ave North Ketchum | 208.309.8676 | info@harveyartprojects.com



Tjunkyaya Tapaya, *Kungkarangkalpa Attila*, acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 inches, Ernabella Artists #567-12.

stone curlew, and emu.

When Dickie paints, he sings traditional songs to himself as he remembers the places he has been. He has been described as “a painter’s painter.” Each layer and line is a memory of a journey. Dickie finishes nearly every work with a final layer under which all secret law is hidden.

“In our country, the APY Lands, we have seven art centers,” reveals artist Milyika Carroll. “Ernabella Arts started in 1948 and it’s still going. We own our art center. We paint tjukurpa—our law and culture. We make strong, beautiful work and it will always be there. Our stories are from a long time ago, and they will live in the future with our children. When they grow up they will be working here. They will be the owners of our art center and keepers of our culture.”

With 20 years experience, Julie is a collector, gallery owner, and advocate for Australian Aboriginal art. She has become an important

figure in this emerging world of art and as a specialist in contemporary Aboriginal art, her advice is paramount and her access to artists priceless. “There’s no formal training,” she tells. “You can have 15 people of all ages sitting in a group around an elder woman painting. It’s how they learn. It’s a process of initiation. Every small detail is purposeful. An artist is more than just an artist. She’s a keeper of culture.”

Coverage of Australia’s emerging contemporary Aboriginal art scene is the subject of a lengthy article in a recent issue of *Art & Antiques Magazine*, in which Julie is featured. “As a collector, this work is very affordable,” says

Julie. “It has an established collector base in Australia. In the US, it’s hard to find but that is starting to change.”

Part of Julie’s role as a collector and gallery representative for Australia’s Aboriginal art is to put together bigger shows in large cities. She is the head curator of the San Francisco based Stephen J. Luczo Collection of Contemporary Aboriginal Art, and she also serves on an advisory council for the Kluge-Rhue Aboriginal Art Collection at the University of Virginia, a permanent collection of Aboriginal art.

“There are Aboriginal art collections at universities such as Harvard, and the Seattle Art Museum was recently gifted a major collection of works,” explains Julie. “Part of being on the council is looking for ways we can use university collections for artists to travel and research through fellowships. Another goal is to have a permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.”

Harvey Art Projects’ plans to have three artists in attendance from the Ernabella Arts center in Australia for Gallery Walk on Friday, February 15 from 5 to 8pm.

HARVEY ART PROJECTS

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