TIMOTHY COOK. *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 120 x 150cm, 166-11, 2011.

nginimuwila kulama – our kulama

New paintings by Timothy Cook and Conrad Tipungwuti

Showing 3rd – 28th June, 2011.

Outstation
art from art centres

8 Parap Place, Parap Northern Territory 0820
P: 08 8981 4822 **F**: 08 8981 4877 **E**: info@outstation.com.au **W**: www.outstation.com.au
Director Matt Ward

Special thanks to *Timothy Cook, Conrad Tipungwuti, Cher Breeze and Barry Hayes*

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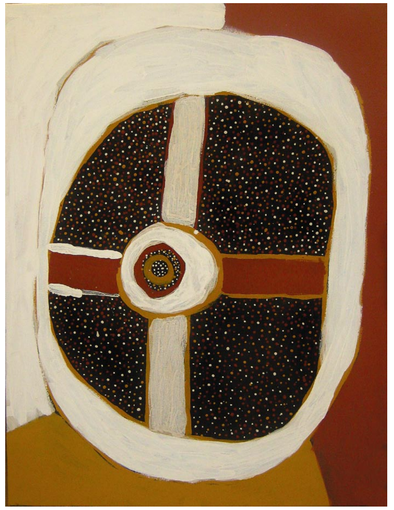
TIMOTHY COOK. *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 120 x 150cm, 165-11, 2011.



TIMOTHY COOK. *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 120 x 90cm, cat no 167-11, 2011.

Front cover: TIMOTHY COOK. *'Kulama' (detail)*, ochre on linen, 120 x 150cm, 351-10, 2010.

Outstation - art from art centres and Jilamara Arts are proud to present

nginimuwila kulama – our kulama

New paintings by Timothy Cook and Conrad Tipungwuti

Tiwi art is recognised for the use of ochres and traditional Jilamara (designs), but the spacious expressive paintings in this exhibition by Timothy Cook and Conrad Tipungwuti differ greatly from the intricate geometric Jilamara paintings of their contemporaries.

Liberated from the tight traditional principles of Tiwi painting, Cook and Tipungwuti both paint with bold confidence that comes from deep within, expressing their Tiwi culture through their depiction of the Kulama ceremony.

Large concentric circles often appear as the main element of their paintings, representing the Kulama circle or ceremonial dancing ground. Inside the rings, a multitude of star people sing and dance Kulama songs. When a gold ring forms around the moon during the final stages of the wet season, the Kulama ceremony is performed and young men are initiated into Tiwi kinship. The songs and dances are icons of Tiwi spiritual belief, the performances express the wishes and desires of the participants for a healthy and prosperous future. The Kulama ceremony is rarely practised nowadays but the significant representation of this ceremony lies deep within both artists.

When watching Cook and Tipungwuti paint, there are exciting moments of energy released. Before your eyes a fresh unrestrained composition emerges. Often vigorously painted, the gestural style with bold lines, circles and dots are applied with creamy thick ochre paint. Once dry, the chalky surface of the canvas with its raw and earthy quality is something only ochre paintings can boast.

Timothy Cook's ability to generate movement through the thick application of natural ochre, produces the striking free-flowing paintings for which he is now recognised. An intuitive artist, his use of contrast between light and dark pigment is striking, achieved by overlaying yellow, white & red ochres on top of black. His Kulama's either float across the canvas or are suspended in space. The cross motif often found in Cook's paintings, spin and push the boundaries inside the Kulama, forming the window to inner space, spiritual beyond what we can see. The dots in his painting aren't just dots – they represent people and as Cook says' his "heaven". It is only the spiritual paintings of Cook's creations that may give you some insight into what the artist is expressing.

Conrad Tipungwuti's recent works reflect an exciting transformation, creating paintings on a larger scale over a few sittings. He is enjoying this new direction painting large Kulama motifs that roll and move within the canvas boundaries and lines that hold tension and energy run across the long canvas. There's a lot of dot-chasing work, an underlining of dots in one colour are chased with dots of another colour, reminiscent of the late Kitty Kantilla (d2003). When Tipungwuti paints he is calm and confident. The finished works have a magical quality that bursts from the surface.

Like many artists Tipungwuti has absorbed composition principles by watching senior artists, in this case Cook. Cook forged a style that is innovative and spiritual, and lies at the heart of Tiwi culture. While the world is ever changing and Tiwi culture is suspended in two worlds, the work of these two great artists remains true.

Cher Breeze

CONRAD TIPUNGWUTI, *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 60 x 200cm, 117-11, 2011.

CONRAD TIPUNGWUTI, *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 60 x 200cm, 19-11, 2011.

CONRAD TIPUNGWUTI, *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 120 x 90cm, 195-11, 2011.

CONRAD TIPUNGWUTI, *'Kulama'*, ochre on linen, 120 x 90cm, 163-11, 2011.