



KURTAL
NEW WORK BY DOLLY SNELL



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Exhibited at Outstation: art from art centres,
in association with
Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency.

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FRONT COVER:

Dolly Snell, *Kurtal Jila (Living Spring)*, 2013, acrylic on
canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (501-13)

LEFT:

Dolly Snell, *Sand Dunes (detail)*, 2013, acrylic on
canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (141-13)

INSIDE BACK COVER:

Dolly Snell, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas,
60 x 90 cm, (421-10)

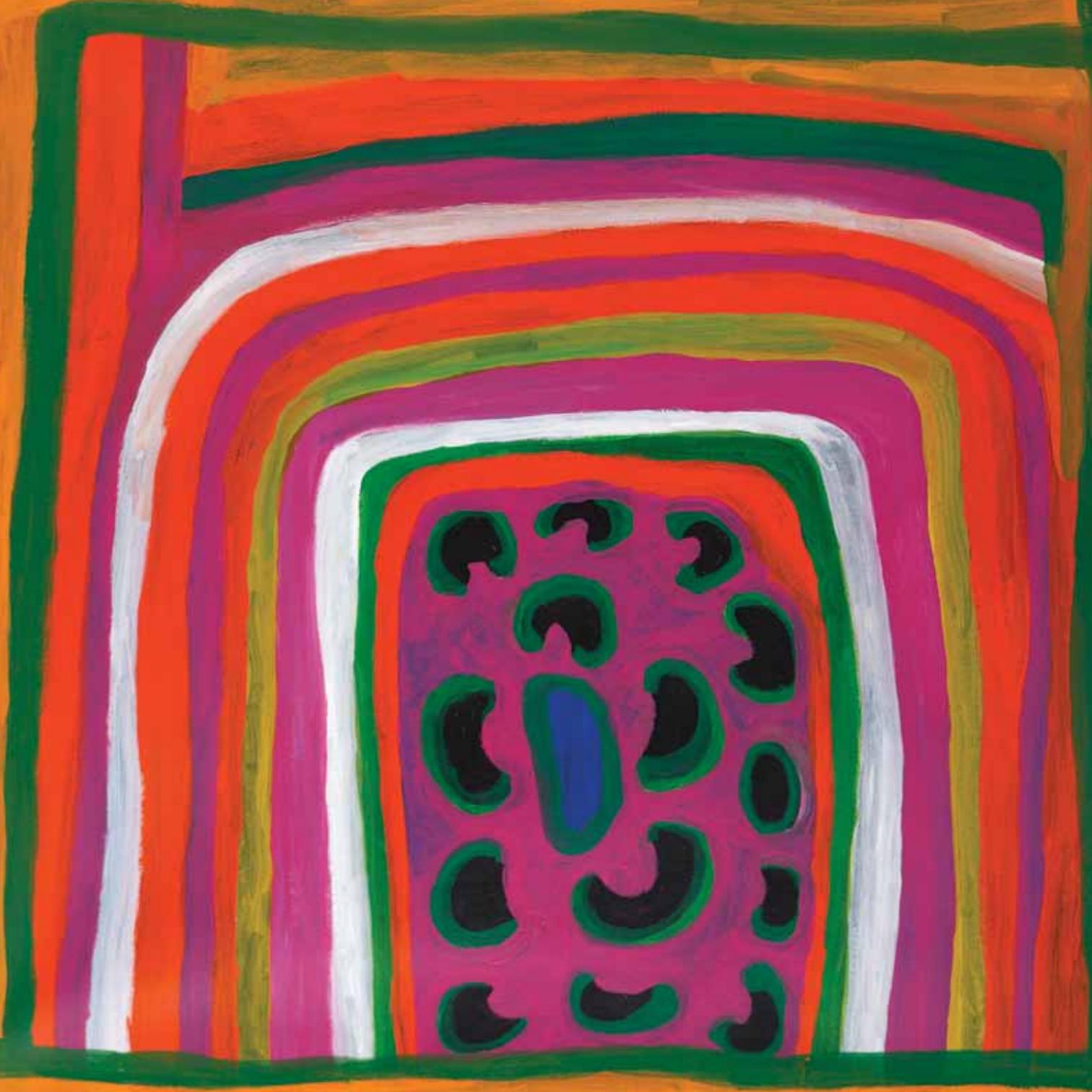
BACK COVER:

Dolly Snell, *Tali*, 2013, acrylic on canvas,
120 x 120 cm, (91-13)

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MANGKAJA
ARTS RESOURCE AGENCY

Outstation
art from art centres



The idea for my painting comes from my country. As long as I was born there at Kurtal [I can paint it]. This place is for my brothers and sisters, all from one place, Kurtal. I do not paint anyone else's jila (living waterhole).

I am feeling a little bit wirriya (happy) about my painting. That's all.



Jukuja Dolly Snell

I have been painting for a long time. I put my own country. It is my country because I was born there. That country, Kurtal, is from my mother and my father. We are painting here at this place, Mangkaja because people like to look at those Kurtal paintings. Never mind you have sent them to Darwin now!

I told you that I can't paint any place. I paint Kurtal. In some of my paintings I put nothing, [no named place]; I painted jumuwarnti (soakwaters). I painted nothing in that one; I didn't paint it properly. In the others I put strong country. I make it my own you know; Jitirr, Kurtal, Paparta, Kilangkilang, I put all of these places.

Everyday people come up and look at those Kurtal paintings and say "oh, you painted it good way". I am not painting [as much] now. I am tired. I started painting a long time ago. Well, kartiya (non-Aboriginal people) when they look at all of these paintings they say, "have you got country?" They ask for the name. All of these paintings, they ask for the name. Some artists put waterholes with no name. We have seen them.

I have made one, a small one that is my private painting. I made it to take to Broome to sell it; might be! This old man [Spider, Jukuja's husband] is thinking about a car. We were talking about it last night. We can't get a Toyota, I can't get up [into a Toyota]; we want a bus.

The idea for my painting comes from my country. As long as I was born there at Kurtal [I can paint it]. This place is for my brothers and sisters, all from one place, Kurtal. I do not paint anyone else's jila (living waterhole). My brothers told me, both of my brothers told me, "don't put another jila, any places for other people. Put your country, don't go over".

I am feeling a little bit wirriya (happy) about my painting. That's all.

Impossible Exile

When Jukuja Dolly Snell exhibited her paintings alongside other Fitzroy Crossing work in Adelaide in 1991, she could not have foreseen that she would be painting more than twenty years later. Her style has changed little since then, as Snell works with bold, modulated colours to envisage some of the most powerful themes in Aboriginal art, from waterholes to cattle stations, sandhills to Dreamings.

Within the changing tones of Snell's palette of blues, greens, purples, oranges and reds, lie visions of such iconic places as Kurtal. She was born at this *jila*, source of living water, and folds the colours over one another to give a sense of how it sits amidst *jilji* or sandhills that run into the other.

Snell remembers such places from the Great Sandy Desert, before she became a part of the Walmajarri diaspora that migrated north to river country. In Jantala, she paints a *jila* that turned into a bore for cattle in the wet season. Jantala symbolises the massive changes that took place on the fringe of the desert, and the beginning of the river country. Aboriginal people worked as domestics, station hands, stockmen and other indentured labour on the new cattle stations that sprang up after the 1880s. When in the late 1960s work on the cattle stations was no longer to be had, a wave of people were again displaced from their homes, and found their way to townships in the Kimberley.

These movements make up the history of the North-West. They brought into being the cosmopolitan centre of Fitzroy Crossing, where the Walmajarri mixed with river people and other desert migrants, exchanging ceremonies and marriages, and becoming a modern society. The contemporary art movement has been a part of this cultural revival, illuminating memories and ideas with paintings for *kartiya*, the whitefella outsiders.

Like the Black Atlantic, that describes the cultural reinvention of African slaves in America, the Aboriginal art movement arose in the wake of exile, migration and indentured labour. It was in exile that the Walmajarri were themselves invented.

PAGE 2: DOLLY SNELL, *Wilam and Jurturangu (Cloud and Rainbow)*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (90-13).

Paintings by Jukuja Dolly Snell

For while Walmajarri names a language from the Great Sandy Desert, the people there were more complex than one tongue. They belonged to certain places, and travelled into and out of different languages as they walked in and out of Dreaming sites and paths. The modulations of colour and shape in Snell's paintings allude to the complex and shifting relations of this life-world, and the changing life-world of those who walked north.

After the seminal 1991 exhibition, called *Karrayili*, Snell became one of the artists who shaped the boom of Aboriginal art in the 1990s. She featured in *Images of Power* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1993, and with another 43 artists, she painted on the *Ngurrara* canvas for Native Title tribunal hearings in 1997. More recently she has been a part of the new collaborative trend in art around the world, exhibiting with Wakartu Cory Surprise and Ildiko Kovacs at Raft in 2009.

This solo exhibition is a chance to see Snell's work beyond this shifting series of contexts for Aboriginal art, as her own distinct voice amidst the cultural clamour of the Kimberley. For great art has always been produced in such situations of exile. Paris and New York became world capitals of art because they hosted people who had migrated from elsewhere, from the Romanian anarchist Tristan Tzara to the Andalusian communist Pablo Picasso. In exile the dreamer is able to see more clearly their dreams, the significance from where they have come and where they are going.

The magic of Snell's paintings lies in her capacity to see her world with such joy, to modulate the colours and soft shapes of her work so that we might grasp the richness of a life lived amidst the bounties of nature and amidst the dramatic shifts of Australian history. Through this exhibition it is possible to get a feeling for the country where Snell has lived, a country that has both changed and remained the same.

Associate Professor Darren Jorgensen, *University of Western Australia*, 2014



I have been painting for a long time. I put my own country. It is my country because I was born there.

That country, Kurtal, is from my mother and my father.



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm, (104-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (132-14)



DOLLY SNELL, *Living Water*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (8-14)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 119 x 119 cm, (246-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal with Jurturangu (Rainbow)*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm, (63-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal Jila*, 2009, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (366-09)



DOLLY SNELL, *Jirtir (My Brother's Country)*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm, (105-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (100-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (62-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Jantala*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (92-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (425-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2014, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (35-14)



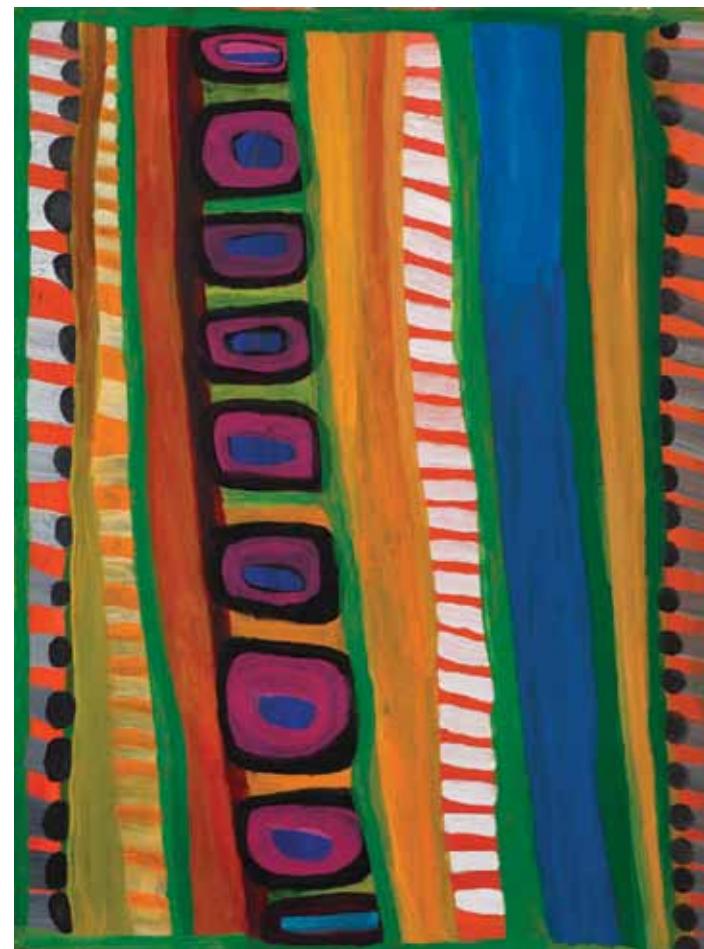
DOLLY SNELL, *Blue Tongue Lizard*, 2010, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, (260-10)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, (318-12)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kutamarti*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (93-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Paparta*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, (94-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Kurtal*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm, (533-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *Jumuwarnti (Soakwaters)*, 2013, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 90 cm, (417-13)



DOLLY SNELL, *My Brother's Country*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, (620-08)

Outstation: art from art centres Darwin

Established in 2008, Outstation Gallery works directly with Aboriginal owned art centres, we present and promote contemporary Indigenous work from both emerging and established artists.

Supporting art from art centres, ensures that fair work practices are maintained. Through many years of direct experience with artists, their art centres and community engagement, we have been able to observe a high ethical standard in our business.

Through our ongoing exhibition program, we hope to support enterprise development for individual artists to sustain an income from their artistic practice and to support art centres in the important role they serve within their communities.

Mangkaja Arts , The Kimberley

Located in the centre of Fitzroy Crossing, Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency grew out of projects run through the Karrayili Adult Education Centre, which provided space for the cultural exchange of stories through learning and bush trips.

Taking its name *Mangkaja*, meaning wet weather spinifex shelter, the current space has evolved to provide a studio working space and gallery.

Work from Mangkaja artists often exhibit a broad, loose description of country.



