

Artback NT presents

PUNUKU TJUKURPA

EDUCATION KIT



AUTHORISATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The artists in *Punuku Tjukurpa* are from various Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaatjatjarra language groups, however only Pitjantjatjara and English are used in this document.

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MARUKU@ULURU



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PUNUKU TJUKURPA

Punuku Tjukurpa is an exhibition of works from the Maruku Arts archive at Mutitjulu near Uluru in the Northern Territory. It features *punu* and *walka* boards created by three generations of *Anangu* (central and western desert people) from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, Ngaatjatjarra Lands and Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

Punuku Tjukurpa includes eighty-eight *punu* works featuring burnt designs on carved wooden forms. Works presented range from *piti* (wooden bowls), *miru* (spear throwers), *tjara* (shields), *kulata* (spears) to beautiful carvings of desert birds and animals. The exhibition also features photographs, audio and film.

In *Punuku Tjukurpa*, *Anangu* share their culture, knowledge and the Law that forms the basis for the intricate designs and markings and the stories that accompany them.

<i>punu:</i>	Anything made of wood, especially artefacts and implements. Living, growing tree or bush or a piece of wood, stick, cut-off branches.
<i>-ku:</i>	Case ending, a word ending that indicates the owner or rightful user of something, the custodian or caretaker.
<i>Tjukurpa:</i>	Story. Dreaming. Law.
<i>walka:</i>	A mark or pattern using hot wire technique that has cultural and ritual significance.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
THE PEOPLE	4
Two worldviews	4
Maruku Arts	4
<i>Tjukurpa</i>	5
The Law	5
Passing on <i>Tjukurpa</i>	5
<i>Minyma</i> (women) and <i>Wati</i> (men)	6
Learning to be a woman	6
Learning to be a man	6
THE PLACE	7
<i>Anangu</i> lands of the central and western deserts	7
Mutitjulu	7
<i>Punu</i> - trees	7
<i>Wanari</i> (blue mulga, <i>Acacia aneura</i>)	7
<i>Itara</i> (river red gum, <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>)	8
<i>Muur-muurpa</i> (desert bloodwood, <i>Eucalyptus terminalis</i>)	8
THE ART	9
<i>Punu</i>	9
<i>Minymaku</i> - <i>punu</i> for women	9
<i>Piti</i> , <i>wira</i> and <i>kanilpa</i>	9
<i>Watiku</i> - <i>punu</i> for men	10
<i>Kulata</i>	10
<i>Miru</i>	10
<i>Kali</i>	11
<i>Tjara</i>	11
Walka boards	12
Symbols	12
<i>Tjulpu tjuta</i> - birds	13
Teapots	15
Carved animals	15
Snakes	16
<i>Punu</i> for trade	16
THE ARTISTS	17
Alan Kenta	17
Billy Cooley	17
Ivy Inkatji	18
Joanne Cooley	18
Niningka Lewis	18
Rolley Mintuma	19

THE EXHIBITION	19
How did the exhibition come about?	19
The role of the curator	20
INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS	20
Principles and Protocols	20
Respect	20
Indigenous control	20
Communication, consultation and consent	20
Interpretation, integrity and authenticity	21
Secrecy and confidentiality	21
Attribution and copyright	21
Proper returns and royalties	21
Continuing cultures	21
Artback NT	21
RESOURCES	22
Video	22
Websites	23
Books	23
GLOSSARY	24
CURRICULUM LINKS	25
Cross-curriculum priorities	25
Intercultural understanding	25

Punuku Tjukurpa

Punuku Tjukurpa is about the *punu* (wood) that has always been part of *Anangu* culture.

'Nyaa wiru? Panya irititja kuzwari pulkaringu tjamuku kamiku Tjukurnguru.

Irititja kuwaritja kulintjaku. Nyakuntjaku. Nintintjaku.

Tjungu nyinara, nyakula, kulira palyantjaku. Alatji nintiringkuku. Alatji kurunypa winki mula-mularingkupai.

Tjamuku kamiku Tjukurpa wiyaringuntja wiya. Ngarala ngaranya.

What is good? These pieces of the past have become important today because they come from our grandfathers' and grandmothers' law and culture.

The old and the new things are to think about. To look at. To teach.

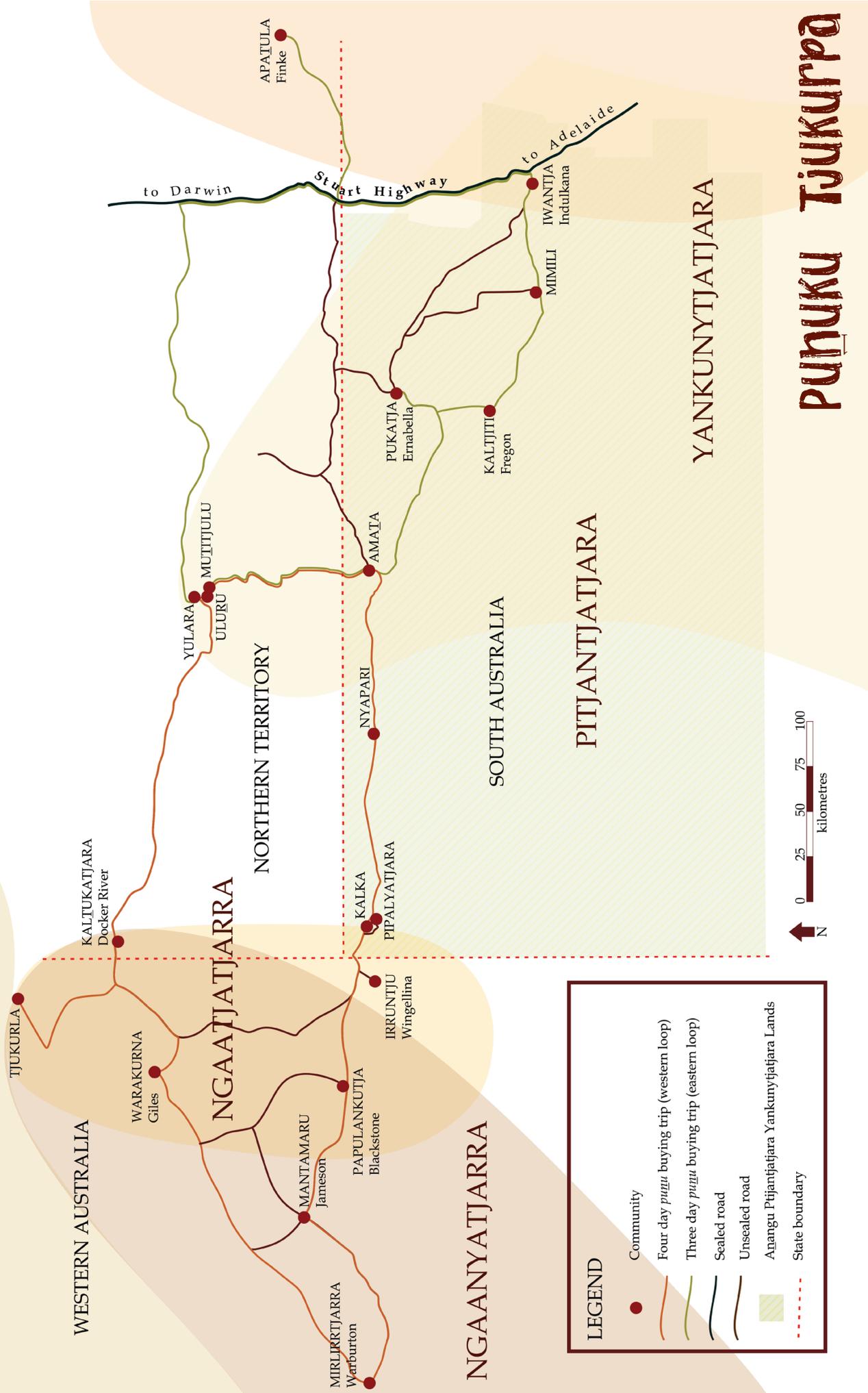
We will sit down to look, listen and do something together. This is the way you will learn. This is the way you will realise something in your soul and your whole being.

Rene Kulitja, May 2014. Translated by Kathy Tozer



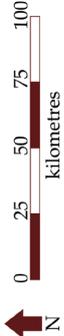
Niningka Lewis, *Early days: tourists stop at Mulga Park, Anangu sitting with the punu*. 2013. Acrylic paint on plywood, 300 x 400 x 8mm.

Maruku Arts *puṁu* buying routes



LEGEND

- Community
- Four day *puṁu* buying trip (western loop)
- Three day *puṁu* buying trip (eastern loop)
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
- - - State boundary



puṁuku Tjukurpa

INTRODUCTION

I am Judy Trigger. I live at Mutitjulu. I have worked as Maruku Chairwoman. I am talking about the *punu* side of the organisation. Naturally in the past people had their carvings. Our grandfathers used spears and spear throwers. Our Grandmothers used digging sticks and bowls. They used to keep their families fed. Nowadays we keep doing this work and we are currently taking it to an exhibition. So come and have a look. Come and see the work we do at Maruku. I am saying now, how happy I am that we have sent this exhibition of our work all around Australia so that everyone has the opportunity to see our work. So I am welcoming each of you to come and see and to understand this part of our culture.

Judy Trigger



Judy Trigger, *Walka board*, 2013. Acrylic on plywood, 400 x 300 x 8mm. Photographer: Alice Buscombe.



Rolley Mintuma, *Kali*, 1998, *Ngalta* (desert kurrajong), acrylic paint, 590 x 25 x 355mm.

My name is Pixie Brown. I have lived for a long time at Mutitjulu. I help Mintuma, Rolley. I clean the *punu* with a wood rasp, the boomerangs and perentie lizards. I also use the wire to burn the designs for him. Rolley carves the boomerangs. Then he gives them to me to rasp and clean with sandpaper. Then he'll make some perentie lizards and then give them to me again, and I will sandpaper them, rasp them and sandpaper them.

Pixie Brown

My name is Rolley Mintuma. I am a long time carver of boomerangs. I make boomerangs and perentie lizards. I've made good boomerangs for a long time for Maruku, they're Maruku boomerangs. That's me - lots of boomerangs. I have always carved boomerangs and perentie lizards. Nowadays I live in Mutitjulu at Uluru. My name is Mintuma. I am happy that my two boomerangs, and perentie, the two used for *inma*, you know the two intertwined ones that show the way they are used in ceremony. Those boomerangs and perentie are travelling in the exhibition and I am happy for that. It is good.

Rolley Mintuma



Rolley Mintuma, *Ngintaka*, 2011. *Muur-muurpa* (desert bloodwood), 880 x 165 x 190mm.

Reference:

Punuku Tjukurpa, exhibition video, Artback NT.

THE PEOPLE

The people who own and sell their work through Maruku Arts live in an area of the central and western desert of Australia. They refer to themselves by the names of their dialects: the Pitjantjatjara (pigeon-ja-jarra), the Yankunytjatjara (young kun-ja-jarra), the Ngaanyatjarra and the Ngaatjatjarra people.

Anangu (arn-ahng-oo) literally means person or human being in Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara. *Anangu* has come to be used as a collective noun in this area, much the same as people might be referred to as *Koori* or *Murri* in eastern Australia.

Linguists group the languages spoken by *Anangu* as dialects of the western desert language. These dialects are some of the most widely spoken Aboriginal languages still in existence in Australia. For most people living in this area English is a second or third language.

Two worldviews

Anangu believe the landscape was created at the beginning of time by ancestral beings and that *Anangu* are the direct descendants of these ancestral beings.

Anangu Law (*Tjukurpa*) is the foundation of *Anangu* life and society. It is the basis of relationships between people, plants, animals and the land. *Anangu* believe they have always been part of the land. The *Anangu* connection to the land and living things is personified in the stories and travels of the creation ancestors in the *Tjukurpa* (see page 5).

According to *Tjukurpa*, people are the living embodiment of place. Caring for the land and participating in law and cultural activities are very important. For *Anangu*, the country dies without its people because human beings, who act according to the law, are fundamental to the wellbeing of the land.

From a western science viewpoint, archaeologists believe Aboriginal people have lived on the Australian continent for at least 60,000 years. However, different areas of Australia were settled at different times as people gradually moved from the abundant coastal areas to the inland desert regions. Archaeological investigations at various sites in central Australia suggest that Aboriginal people have inhabited the area for between 22,000 and 30,000 years.

While the European colonisation of Australia began in 1788, it did not reach central Australia until the 1870s when explorer Ernest Giles and surveyor William Gosse came to the area.

In 1901 the British Parliament passed legislation allowing the six Australian colonies to govern in their own right as part of the Commonwealth of Australia. Traditional Aboriginal lands were trisected by two state and the territory boundaries leaving a mobile population to deal with four different governments.

By the 1940s European missions and pastoral companies were being established in central Australia and the last traditional nomadic families moved from the desert regions to settlements in the 1960s.

In 1985 the Australian Government returned Uluru and Kata Tjuta to the Traditional Owners and in doing so created the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. Part of an agreement was to jointly manage the park with an *Anangu* majority on the Board. Returning the land to *Anangu* was the result of a long land rights campaign and was an important symbol in the development of co-operative relations between government and Aboriginal people.

Reference:

Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park Notes

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/uluru-kata-tjuta-national-park/culture-and-history/anangu-language>

http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/downloads/PN2%20-%20Anangu_language.pdf

Maruku Arts

Ngayulu ini Rene Kulitja. Munu ngayulu pukulpa panya Anangu ngura winkinguru Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, munu Yankuntjatjarangu punu wiru tjuta palayni. Nyangatja panya Anangu maru tjutaku organisation.

My name is Rene Kulitja. I am proud of the people from all over the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankuntjatjara lands making beautiful carvings. This (Maruku Arts) is well known as an Aboriginal organisation.

Rene Kulitja, September 2008

Maruku Arts is a not-for-profit art and craft organisation owned and controlled by *Anangu* for *Anangu*. Maruku Arts was established in 1984 through the trading arm of *Anangu Uwankaraku Punu Aboriginal Corporation*. Maruku Arts is among the earliest Aboriginal collectives supporting artists across the central and western desert regions. *Anangu* created the Corporation mainly in response to a growing need for the effective coordination of marketing and support services for Aboriginal craftspeople living in the region. Maruku literally means 'belonging to black'. *Anangu Uwankaraku* means 'belonging to all *Anangu*'.

With a warehouse now located at the Mutitjulu community near Uluru, Maruku Arts operates as a regional centre providing a service to some 900 *Anangu* craftspeople and artists living in approximately 18 communities and homeland centres to the west, south, east and north of Uluru. It also has a retail outlet known as the *Punuku Ngura* (Home of Wood) in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Cultural Centre. Maruku Arts primarily sells two and three-dimensional works, (*punu*), where artists use a combination of contemporary and traditional techniques.

The creation of art and craft and the ability to pass on the knowledge and culture to future generations has always been highly important to *Anangu*. Being able to produce and sell on a regular basis is therefore a great prospect to keep the culture strong and alive. Each artist has their own designs, techniques and stories which have been passed on to them over thousands of years.

For more information about the history of Maruku Arts see the essay by Stephen Fox in the *Punuku Tjukurpa* exhibition catalogue or visit

<http://www.artbacknt.com.au>

<http://www.maruku.com.au>



Artworks at Maruku Arts warehouse, 2014.
Photographer: Alice Buscombe.

Maruku Arts is a retail outlet that displays traditionally crafted *punu* (wooden object) tools and artefacts with new art forms from *Anangu* artists in the central and western desert regions.

Maruku artist Nellie Patterson likened Maruku to desert mice because they have a central nest with multiple tunnels and exits. Maruku art buyers go to the *punu* makers in all their communities to bring the *punu* back to the central nest of the warehouse.

Tjukurpa

Tjukurpa (chook-orr-pa) is an immensely complex term to try to translate into English. It is a holistic concept that covers many things that in English have been divided into different categories or disciplines such as history, geography, law, economics, politics, education, philosophy, religion, sociology, psychology, the arts and ritual.

Tjukurpa is the foundation of *Anangu* life and society. A central principle of *Tjukurpa* is that people and landscape are one.

Tjukurpa tells how creation ancestors came from the earth and travelled across it, having adventures and leaving their mark on the landscape in various forms. Some ancestors travelled thousands of kilometres across the country of many different Indigenous peoples. Others stayed in one place and brought their special effect to that area alone.

According to *Tjukurpa*, people are born from the land and return to the land when they die. *Anangu* therefore share a spiritual identity with the land and particularly with the site where they were born.

Many *Anangu* feel a particular responsibility for their country as part of their flesh and blood and commonly speak of particular landscape features in human terms such as 'this is my grandfather' or 'this is my grandmother'.

The Law

Anangu life revolves around keeping *Tjukurpa* alive and strong. *Tjukurpa* is not simply a story that explains how physical things like rocks and trees came to be. *Tjukurpa* is also a legal system containing rules that guide correct procedures for dealing with and judging problems.

Passing on Tjukurpa

Tjukurpa is an oral tradition passed from one generation to the next. Ceremonies play an important role in the passing of knowledge to the people who have the responsibility to maintain particular sections of *Tjukurpa*. There are a variety of ways for remembering *Tjukurpa*, such as stories, songs, art, ritual and dance.

The story versions of *Tjukurpa* often contain details used by the individual storyteller to make the story seem more vivid to listeners. *Anangu* consider it a great talent to be able to embellish and illustrate *Tjukurpa* well without altering the substance of the story.

A good storyteller is able to adapt the story to ensure only the right level of detail is given to the right person, at the right time, by the right person. For example, certain aspects are strictly for women,

or only for men, and a person must go through the right processes to entitle them to higher levels of both learning and teaching. At times, this has posed a problem for *Anangu* because mainstream society has a concept of freedom of information and copyright: the permanent recording of aspects of *Tjukurpa* in different media over which *Anangu* have no control conflicts with this tradition of culturally appropriate sharing of information. It is also very important that a storyteller should only speak for their own country.

References:

Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park Notes

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/downloads/PN3%20-%20Tjukurpa.pdf>

Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park Knowledge Handbook, page 94-97

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d97e9851-014c-4bd0-96c8-9b05c59da72a/files/handbook.pdf>

Minyma (women) and Wati (men)

Very strict guidelines exist around behaviours for men and women in *Anangu* culture. This extends to the types of *punu* they make. Some *Tjukurpa* relates only to men or only to women and this influences the *walka* (designs) they may use in this work.

Learning to be a woman

In *Anangu* culture, girls build their knowledge and skills throughout their lives. From an early age they watch their mothers, grandmothers and older sisters looking for bush food and tracking animals.



Mr Kenta, *Minyma*, c. 1993. *Itara* (river red gum), acrylic paint, 400 x 180 x 175mm.

They see how the women’s tools like *wana* (digging stick), *wira* (coolamon), *piti* (bowl) and *manguri* (head ring) are used and made.

Kungkawara, (teenage girls), spend a lot of time with their grandmothers, mothers and aunts who teach them about the country while looking for bush food. *Minyma* (older women) and *minyma pampa* (senior women) instruct younger women in women’s Law. Further details of the Law are revealed to them as they grow

older and participate in women’s *inma* (ceremony).

Just as in other cultures young girls play at adult activities, *minyma-minyma* refers to games of pretending to be women involving making small *wiltjas* (shelters), hunting and damper making. *Miilpatjunanyi* or *mani-manitjunanyi* are storytelling games where young girls use sticks or bent wire to tell stories in the sand to each other or alone. All of these things are still done today.

Learning to be a man

In *Anangu* culture there is a big difference between boys and men. Boys live with their mothers and sisters, and know little about men’s Law. They have yet to learn the knowledge and skills that men need to know.



Mr Kenta, *Wati*, c. 1993. *Itara* (river red gum), acrylic paint, 440 x 130 x 120mm.

At the right time they learn *watiku ara* (the skills and knowledge they need to know to become men). They learn men’s *Tjukurpa* and are introduced to secret ceremonies, songs and men’s sacred sites.

The young boys travel across the country with the men, learning where the *Tjukuritja* (ancestral beings) went and how they changed the country. They learn where water can be found. The men teach them where to hunt for *kuka* (meat). They hunt *malu* (red kangaroo), *kalaya* (emu) and large lizards such as *ngintaka* (perentie) and *tinka* (goanna). They learn the names and habits of these animals, how to recognise their tracks and the kind of country they like.

Reference:

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park - Knowledge for Tour Guides, page 146/7

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/values/indigenous/uluru.html>

THE PLACE



Desert woodlands, Central Australia, 2011.
Photographer: Alice Buscombe.

***Anangu* lands of the central and western deserts**

Punuku Tjukurpa features art-making traditions that come from *Anangu* communities and homelands ranging across the tri-border region of Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia. See the location map on page 6.

While the landscape is mostly flat, sandy country covered by low scrub and the sand dunes, there is a diversity of habitats classified by *Anangu* as: *tali* (sand dunes), *puti* (woodlands, predominantly mulga), *karu* (desert rivers), *pila* (grasslands including *tjanpi* or spinifex) and *puli* (rocky outcrops and ranges).

In the summer months, the central and western deserts experience high temperatures, on average 37.8°C with low humidity. However in winter, the temperature at night regularly drops to zero, averaging 4.7°C. The annual rainfall is about 217mm.

Anangu have maintained a culture of regularly burning the land in a patchwork method that creates an open landscape. Contained burning supports the habitat of small plant eating animals like grasshoppers, grubs, termites and medium-sized mammals. Cool burning fires also help to recycle nutrients into the soil and prevent hazardous wildfires.

Anangu most commonly refer to burning as important for ensuring the abundance of kangaroo and emu as well as bush tucker like *kampurarpa* (bush tomatoes). See Jim Nyukuti speaking about burning country in the *Punuku Tjukurpa* exhibition video.

Mutitjulu

Mutitjulu (moor-ti-chew-loo) is located on the eastern side of Uluru. It is 466km from Alice Springs by road. Mutitjulu is named after a waterhole at the base of Uluru and is the home base of Maruku Arts. Between 350 and 400 people live at Mutitjulu at any one time. There is a community store, community council, school, garage, aged and disability care centre, job agency, land council office, football oval (dirt) and a swimming pool. However, it still suffers the severe housing shortage common to many Indigenous communities.

Reference:

Uluru-Kata Tjuta: Knowledge for Tour Guides

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/background/crosscultural/culturalknowledge.html>

***Punu* – trees**

Punu can mean many things; from a tree, firewood, to objects made from wood. The following are descriptions of three main tree species used for the making of *punu*.

***Wanari* (blue mulga, *Acacia aneura*)**

Wanari is one of the most significant trees for *Anangu* and each part of the tree has a traditional use. *Wanari* is an important source of wood for implements such as *miru* (spear thrower), *mukulpa* (barbs), *wata* (spear heads), *kali* (boomerangs), *wana* (digging sticks), *tjara* (shields), *kuturu* (women's clubs) and *tjutinyapa* (men's clubs). *Wanari* is easy to work with when green and it does not crack. It dries hard and strong. *Wiltja* (shelter) and *yuu* (windbreak) are constructed from the leafy branches.

Wanari are valuable sources of food too: the *wintalyka* (seeds) are a staple part of *Anangu* traditional diet. Women allow the branches to dry then beat them to remove the pods. This removes the seeds, which have to be heated in hot ash to crack open the hard cases. Once separated they are ground and mixed with a little water to make *latja* (edible paste). A type of scale insect leaves clear sweet lumps along the smaller branches. *Anangu* call this *kurku* and eat it as a lolly. *Wanari* stands provide shelter and food for game including *malu* (red kangaroo). *Tjala* (honey ants) are a popular sweet food source found under the *wanari*.

***Itara* (river red gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)**

Itara grows throughout the region but mostly along sandy watercourses. The leaves have a sweet edible crust called *ngapari*. *Unganangu* (edible grubs) are collected from *itara* branches and roots, while wood from the roots is used to make bowls. *Itara* is the most commonly used wood for carving animals.

***Muur-muurpa* (desert bloodwood, *Eucalyptus terminalis*)**

Muur-muurpa is a tall tree common to the region. *Anangu* use this tree for making medicine, food and tools. *Tjau* (the red sap), which oozes from breaks in the bark, is a disinfectant for washing wounds and an inhalant for colds and coughs. *Angura* (bloodwood apples or bush coconuts) are used as a

food source. They have a layer of white, edible flesh and the grub inside the fruit is eaten raw. The wood is used to make *wira*, *kanyilpa* and *piti* (bowls).

A lot of the *punu* in the exhibition is by old people who have passed away. These old people did a lot of carvings and it's still going. Some people might think we'll run out of wood but we've got a lot of mulga trees in our country.

Billy Cooley

References:

Bushfires & bushtucker: Aboriginal Plant Use in Central Australia, Peter Latz, 1996.

Habitats and Flora 2009: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Knowledge Handbook

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d97e9851-014c-4bd0-96c8-9b05c59da72a/files/handbook.pdf>



River red gum, 2012.
Photographer: Alice Buscombe.

THE ART



Topsy Tjulyata, *Piti*, 2000. *Itara* (river red gum) and *kiti* (spinifex resin), 815 x 150 x 193 mm.

Punu

Punuku Tjukurpa is made up of carvings and artefacts made from wood, collectively known as *punu*, made by members of Maruku Arts. *Punu* has always been part of *Anangu* culture. Most *punu* were traditionally carved for practical purposes and occasionally decorated. *Punu* can now be bought commercially at Maruku Arts and features many of the intricate *walka* (designs) common to those found in caves or made in sand drawings. Sculptures, artefacts and *walka* boards feature pokerwork designs that are burnt into the wood with hot wire. While many artists are faithful to both traditional and contemporary carving styles in their work, some are continually exploring new mediums, techniques and designs within the *punu* tradition.

Both men and women make *punu* such as *walka* boards, animal carvings and sculptures. Non-gender specific carvings are predominantly done by women.

References:

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/values/indigenous/uluru.html>

Gaye Sculthorpe, *Punu Tjuta, Change and Innovation in Western Desert Carving*, doctoral thesis, June 1996.

Activity

Bowls are used in many cultures to serve and collect food and are also used for drinking and storing other items. They have existed for thousands of years. Very early bowls have been found in China, Ancient Greece and Aboriginal cultures. Modern bowls can be made of ceramic, metal, wood, plastic, and other materials. Write about your favourite bowl at home. What is it used for? What is it made from? Where is it from? What is its story?

***Minymaku - punu* for women**

Punu for women includes:

- *Piti* – wooden bowls
- *Mimpu* – deep bowl for carrying water
- *Wira* – small bowl or scoop
- *Kanilpa* – a shallow wooden bowl used for collecting and winnowing seeds
- *Wana* – digging stick
- *Kuturu* – hunting club

Piti, wira and kanilpa

wira, piti nyangatja kuwaritja wiya. Tjana dreamin' nganana wiyangka, ngayuku kami wiyangka...Tjana pitjara nyangangi, Tjukurpa.

The bowls are not recent things. The ancestors of the Creation Time, before any of us, before our grandmothers... they came and they saw, this is *Tjukurpa*.

Nancy Miller

Women usually make different types of bowls used for specific purposes. *Piti* (wooden bowl) is a traditional women's carrying vessel for food and water. It is carried on the head with the support of *manguri* (a head-ring made out of spun hair stuffed with emu feathers or grasses, now commonly made with hand spun wool). It is also used to carry children under the arm, which allowed women to breastfeed as they moved about.

Kanilpa (smaller bowl, narrower than the *piti*) are used for winnowing and sifting grass seeds for food preparation.

Wira (the smallest of the bowls) are used as a scoop for water and as a digging aid. The bowls were usually made of *muur-muurpa* – bloodwood (*Eucalyptus terminalis*), though nowadays they are mostly made from *itara* – river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*).

Mimpu are a deeper water carrying vessel made by cutting the burl of a tree or from a curved root section.

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/piti-co-bowls/>



Jorna Newberry, *Mimpu*, 2000. *Muur-muurpa* (bloodwood), 310 x 300 x 340mm.



Ivy Inkatji, *Piti*, c.1995.
Itara (river red gum), 710mm x 290mm x 195mm.

This work is hand carved and incised with Pitjantjatjara *walka* (patterns), and an image of the *ngintaka*, perentie (lizard), burnt into the wood with hot wire.

A *piti* can be just that – an object that once carried food or water such as the *mimpu* (deep bowl for carrying water). In recent times, women such as Ivy Inkatji have burnt stories of the *ngintaka* onto their bowls. This moves that bowl into another dimension, something with *Tjukurpa*, something with a story, something connected to country, something sacred.

Stephen Fox, curator *Punuku Tjukurpa*

Wana (digging stick)

Women have usually two types of sticks mostly made from mulga (*Acacia aneura*). *Wana* is the larger of the two sticks; it is tapered and hardened at one end and fire hardened. It is known as a digging stick. *Kuturu* is tapered at both ends and shorter, it is usually plain but can be incised or decorated with burned or painted designs. A weapon exclusive to women for settling disputes, it is also used in ceremonies.

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/wana-digging-stick/>



Artist Unknown, *Kuturu*. 2014. *Wanari* (mulga), 111 x 540.
 Photographer: Alice Buscombe.

Right: Walter Pukutiwara, *Miru*, year unknown. *Wanari* (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex resin), *kanti* (quartz flake), *pulyku* (sinew), ochre, 865 x 50 x 90mm.

Watiku - punu for men

Punu for men includes:

- *Miru* – spear throwers
- *Kulata* – spears
- *Tjara* – shields
- *Tjutinpa* – hunting club

Kulata

Kulata refers to a type of spear that is approximately 2.7 metres long and is made from the long flexible branches of the tecoma or spearwood vine. The shaft is heated by passing it through a small fire, straightened and then smoothed down. A *wata* (flat hardwood spearhead and barb) is secured to the shaft with *kiti* (spinifex resin) and lashed together with kangaroo or emu sinew. The throwing end is tapered and formed to fit a spear thrower peg. The *kulata* is designed for maximum efficiency as a projectile for hunting large game.



Frank Young, *Kulata*, 2012.
Wanari (mulga wood), *kiti* (spinifex resin), *pulyku* (sinew),
 2890 x 25mm | 2740 x 25mm | 2755 x 30mm.

Miru

A *miru* (spear thrower) is one of a man's most important possessions. It is a multipurpose implement, which not only launch the spears with increased force and speed during the hunt, but is traditionally also used for spear sharpening, cutting meat and as a carving tool. It is also the main fire lighting tool of the area and in wet weather it is used to shield the fire stick that men travel with. It could also be used to deflect spears in combat. The design work is personal to the artist and relates to sacred men's business – it cannot be publicly revealed.

The men cut out a good straight piece of mulga and in the old days, without axes, this was done with stone, or a club fitted with a quartz stone knife. The outside bark is then scraped out and the back cleaned and smoothed. At a certain stage *kiti* (spinifex resin) is placed on the end and a mulga wood tip to hook into the end of the



spear and is bound on with kangaroo sinew. *Kanti* (sharp blade stone) is set into the *kiti* to be used to cut meat when hunted. The *miru* is then ready the next day to be loaded with the spear, ready for the hunt.

Miru nyanga palula miringku, matji wiyangka, tjanamangka Tjukurpa tjanamangka nyangatja, waru palyaningi miru nyanga palula, runkara tililpai. Munu waru tjangilta katipai iritinguru.

Anangu Tjilpi

With a *miru* like this, according to their Law, they made fire in the days before matches, using it as a fire saw. Then they always travelled with a fire stick, ever since ancient times.

Senior Anangu men

References:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/kulata-spears/>

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/miru-spear-thrower/>

Kali

The central and western desert boomerang is a non-returning type and is made from flinched sections of mulga wood. The convex surface of the boomerang is smooth, fluted or incised with designs relating to the craftsmen's ceremonial birthplace.

Although made primarily as a hunting weapon, boomerangs are also used in pairs as musical accompaniment during *inma* (ceremonies) when they are rhythmically clapped together.



Artist unknown, *Kali*, year unknown. *Wanari* (mulga wood), ochre, 1110 x 30 x 200mm.

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/kali-boomerang/>

Tjara

Central and western desert men make mulga or bloodwood shields, which vary in size. The distinctive features are the face, which may be flat or slightly convex, while the reverse side has an opening cut into the wood to make a handle. *Tjara* may feature a variety of incised designs personal to the artist's country and *Tjukurpa*. It is essentially a spear deflecting shield and is yet another example of unique desert craftsmanship.



Reggie Jackson would say of his *tjara*, 'this is my mark'. He was proud of that mark; it was about his place; it belonged to him and he shared it with us. Stephen Fox (exhibition curator) explains that 'we should not ask too much about marks on his *tjara* and *miru*. We should remain honoured that we can share objects that carry such strength. The marks made are powerful, they belong to country, they belong to *Anangu*.'

Stephen Fox, *Punuku Tjukurpa* catalogue essay

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/tjara-shields/>

Reggie Jackson, *Tjara*, c.1998. *Wanari* (mulga wood), acrylic paint, 935 x 55 x 150mm.

Tjutinyapa

Central and western desert people make a variety of hunting, fighting and ceremonial clubs and adzing tools, which are all made from mulga wood. Those used exclusively by men are *tjutinyapa* (clubs and shields), long narrow clubs fitted with *kiti* (spinfex or mulga resin), which is used to hold *kanti* (a quartz cutting blade) in the handle. These are used primarily for hunting: for sharpening spears beforehand; killing a kangaroo with a very specific blow to the back of the neck after spearing; for preparing the animal for cooking to a very strict and ancient code. This code is still religiously followed today even though spear and club are replaced by rifle, club and knife.

Kantitja is the name given to a range of adzing and grooving tools used by men in the making and decorating of weapons. *Warayiti* is a rarer club made by Ngaatjatjarra and Ngaanyatjarra men which is flat and sword-like in shape and is traditionally a fighting weapon. Clubs are also used in ceremony to rhythmically pound the earth.

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/tjutinyapa-kanttjara-clubs-chisels/>



Unknown, *Tjutinyapa*, year unknown. *Wanari* (mulga wood), *kiti* (spinfex resin), *kanti* (quartz flake), 660 x 60 x 60mm.

Activity

Design a series of tools you would need if you were living in a forest or in the bush. Think about how you would construct shelter and make hunting implements. What would your tools be made of? How would they be used?

Come up with a design to indicate they belong to you.



Sadie Singer, *Walka Board*, 2008. Acrylic paint on plywood, 435 x 300 x 7mm.



Joanne Cooley, *Walka Board*, 2012. Acrylic paint on plywood, 1273 x 442 x 38mm.

Walka boards

Walka (design) boards are unique to the artists of Maruku Arts. The technique for making *walka* boards is also known as *puṇu* (burned marks using hot wire etching techniques).

Walka is a mark or pattern and has cultural and ritual significance. The meaning of the designs vary depending on the subject of the painting and person responsible for image.

Walka boards are initially etched with *walka* using hot wire technique and then sometimes painted. These boards reflect strong culture and refer to ancestral travels, celebrating the sacred nature of the country and its interrelated plant, animal and human inhabitants.

Walka boards were initially introduced at Maruku in 1995 by the then manager, Kerry Williams. Kerry commissioned large *walka* panels done by Topsy Tjulyata and Pulya Taylor for both the Yulara resort and the Maruku retail outlet in the new Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Culture Centre. Artists were keen to take advantage of the new medium. It allows *Anangu* who might find it difficult accessing raw timber to still work in the medium of wood and burnt designs.

Activity: sand drawings

See Rene Kulitja speaking about burning country in the *Puṇuku Tjukurpa* exhibition video, (from the 4.15 minute mark).

Tell a story about your family, where you live or a journey you went on.

Find a sand pit or sandy place where you can sit. Draw images in the sand with a stick to help tell the story. Use your own symbols to tell the story, make multiple drawings to illustrate the different parts of the story. Photograph each drawing like a cartoon sequence or video the story.

Symbols

Distinctive symbols, such as circles, lines, dots and animal tracks form a language that is used to tell a story that can be read through the design. Markings associated with specific *Tjukurpa* are also painted onto the body and ritual objects during ceremonies; this is commonly seen today in desert 'dot paintings' but it is also shown in the designs on carvings and *walka* boards.

As an everyday activity, desert people also draw on the ground with their fingers when they are telling stories (like a storyboard), progressively rubbing out episodes and starting afresh as they go. This is called *mani-mani* or *milpatjunanyi*, sometimes translated as 'sand talk' with the designs playing an important part in conveying the story's meaning.

The meaning of a desert symbol varies according to the context or the story being told. A circle, for example, can represent a campsite, a waterhole, a hill or the root of a plant; a wavy line can represent a river, a pathway, a snake, a root system and so on. Each symbol can also convey a number of meanings at the same time, and this will be

understood according to the level of a person's ceremonial knowledge.

Using this simple set of symbols artists can compose pictures of either simplicity or great complexity to convey their ancestral stories. The act of creating works is also meaningful and often includes the singing of the stories as it is done. It is another way of reconnecting the artist to the *Tjukurpa* and is becoming another important way of teaching it to the young.

See the symbol meaning sheet on page 14.

Sculpture

Tjulpu tjuṭa - birds

This colourful painted carving by Niningka Lewis is a unique interpretation of her Pitjantjatjara homelands around the Pipalyatjara and Kalka communities in northwest South Australia.

Many birds inhabit *Anangu* central and western desert country. Their songs and colours are part of the landscape.

Water dictates the survival and behaviours of birds. Many are either nomadic or migratory, and after periods of good rain will move into the area in great numbers.

The need to drink usually keeps birds within flying distance of water. Insect eaters are the largest group and intimate knowledge of their habits help *Anangu* to locate water and food. Carnivorous birds like hawks supplement their water intake through moisture from food.

Niningka Lewis, *Tjulpu Tjuṭa*, c.1999. *It̪ara* (river red gum), acrylic paint, 235 x 55 x 92mm.

Activity: bird calls

Anangu identify and name birds by their calls. This way of naming birds is called a mnemonic (memory device). Spend a little time saying the names and listening to the birds, and you will soon discover how practical this system is. Often *Anangu* call similar sounding species by the same general name.

Look up the following birds and find a picture of them. Listen to their calls by clicking on the links below. Mimic the call and write down the call as a word or name for the bird.

tjintir-tjintir (willie wagtail)

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/factsheets/audio/rhipidura-leucophrys.mp3>

kiyar-kiyar (galah)

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/factsheets/audio/cacatua-roseicapilla.mp3>

kurparu (magpie)

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/factsheets/audio/gymnorhina-tibicen.mp3>

kakalyalya (white cockatoo)

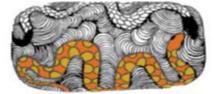
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/factsheets/audio/cacatua-galerita.mp3>

iranti (black cockatoo)

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/sites/www.birdsinbackyards.net/files/factsheets/audio/calyptorhynchus-funereus.mp3>



ABORIGINAL GRAPHIC SYMBOLS AND MEANINGS – ENGLISH



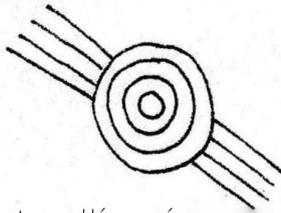
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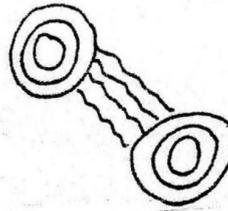
Manta - Landscape



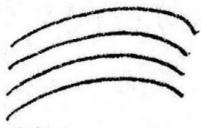
Ngura - main campsite, stone, well, campfire, rockhole, burrow, fruit, sacred site



Iwara - travelling sign, with a resting place or waterhole



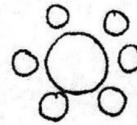
Kapi tjukula - water hole, running water



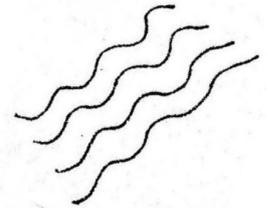
Tali - sand dune



Kapingku puyini - heavy rain / rain, **Liru/Kuniya** - snake, **Tjutirangu** - rainbow



Tjintu or kililpi - sun or star

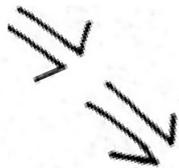


Waru - fire, smoke, water, very old story

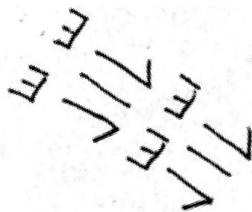
Kuka Tjuta munu Mai Wiru - Animals & Food Plants



Kalaya tjina - Emu tracks



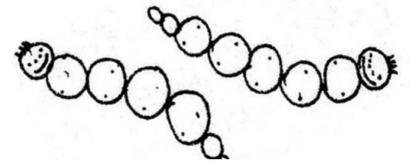
Malu tjina - kangaroo tracks



Malu nyinanyi - Kangaroo sitting

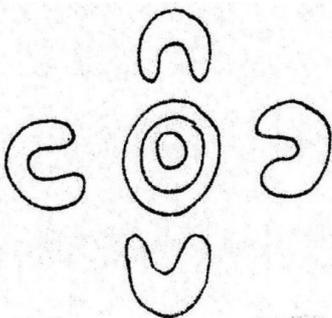


Ili - Fig

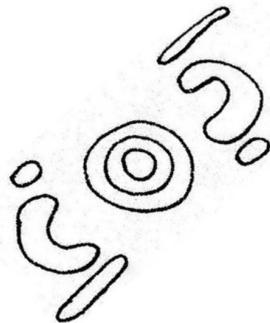


Maku - witchetty grubs

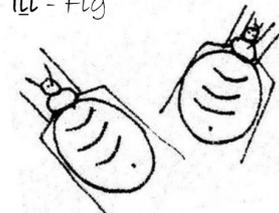
Anangu - People



Anangu nyinanyi - people sitting



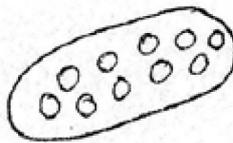
Minyma nyinanyi - women sitting



Tjala - honey ants



Mai wiru - bush tucker



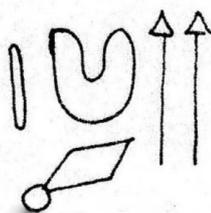
Piti maitjara - bowl with bush tucker



Wana - Digging stick



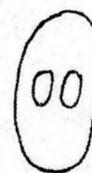
Tjina - Human tracks



Wati nyinanyi - man sitting



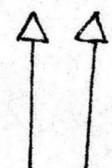
Kali - NO7 boomerang



Tjara - Shield



Miru - Spear thrower



Kulata - Spears

This artwork is an original by a Central Australian Aboriginal Artist. Copyright for both artwork and certificate remains with Maruku Arts Anangu Uwakaraku Pungu Aboriginal Corporation

Teapots

Niningka Lewis has been making teapots for some years in carved wood and *tjanpi* (woven spinifex grass) and raffia.

To Niningka, teapots were strange items used by the staff at Ernabella Mission where she grew up. The daily ritual of making tea with a teapot was a source of fascination for Aboriginal people. Niningka's teapot looks real and is carved from the hardwood of a river red gum tree, but it is probably not very good for making actual tea! It is therefore a whimsical object used for ornamentation.

Other items people have carved inspired by contact with non-*Anangu* include vases, walking sticks, sculpted poles and camels. Works in the exhibition by Mr Kenta and Ronnie Allen include Egyptian style figurines and monkeys.



Niningka Lewis, *Teapot*, 2013. *Itara* (river red gum), acrylic paint, 120x 90 x 270mm.

Activity

Make billy tea and damper on a fire in the school grounds. Make a *wiltja* (shelter). Tell stories in a group while you wait for your billy to boil.

Discuss what *Anangu* might have used instead of tea when they needed a stimulant, for example, *mingkulpa* or bush tobacco was used on long dry walks to generate saliva and energy. A sweet drink was made with the nectar of *kaliny-kalinypa* or honey grevillea.

Discuss how *Anangu* would drink. Perhaps by crouching and drinking directly from waterholes, by using *wira* as ladles and cups, sometimes even by using rolled up grasses to access water in small holes in the rocks. What other plants could they get moisture from?

Carved animals

Carved animals are crafted mainly by women, although some men specialise in large animal carvings. Desert animals are carved from sections of root from the river red gum and occasionally from mulga wood. The *punu* are decorated with *walka* (designs) burnt into the wood with wire heated on a wood fire. Carvings are recognized by their size and distinctive *walka*. The animals all have their associations with *Tjukurpa*.

Ngintaka (perentie, *Varanus giganteus*) is the largest lizard of central Australia and is a highly prized and important food. The *ngintaka* represents powerful *Tjukurpa* for *Anangu*, celebrated in *inma* (ceremonies), storytelling and artwork.

Tinka, *kurkatji*, *milpali* (sand goanna, *Varanus gouldii*) live in burrows in the sandhills and plains country and they have always been an important source of *kuka* (meat) for *Anangu*. They are still hunted by women in the spring and summer time when they have ended their underground hibernation and can easily be tracked across the red sands. They are also among the most widely carved animals on the lands. Being such a prized food it is no wonder that close study of its every move for centuries has led to it being so well understood.

Reference:

<http://www.maruku.com.au/product/kuka-tjuta-animals/>



Ivy Inkatji, *Tingkanku Ngalkuni*, c.1998. *Itara* (river red gum), 500 x 82 x 75mm.

Tinka, *ngintaka tjulpu kutjupa tjuta ngayulu nyakuntjanungku kulira palyalpai. Kutjupara ngayulu Tjukurpa kulira walka tjunkuntja, paintamilantja Tjukurtjara. Inma tjara. Ka kutjupa tjutangku kulini Munta uwa maru tjutaku Tjukurpa ngaranya talingka karungka.*

After watching the goannas, perentie lizards, birds and other animals I decide how to make them. Sometimes I'm thinking of *Tjukurpa* and the design or painting has a story. It has a song. And people realise, of course, there is Aboriginal Law in the dunes and in the creek beds.

Niningka Lewis

Punu nyangatja ngali palyalpai. Munuli tjulpu tjuta, ngintaka munu milpali tjuta palyalpai munuli ungupai uwankara kilina, tjilkar- tjilkarpi wiyangka. Ngalimpa nguranguru ngalimpa karu tjuta ngarinyi ila wiru. Kali, punu palunya tjananya wirunya palyalpai pukultu.

We've always done this carving. We made all sorts of birds, perenties and sand goannas and we always finished them so they were smooth, not rough when we gave them to Maruku. From our homeland a lot of creek beds are nice and close. We really enjoyed making boomerangs and all our other carvings.

Gordon Inkatji

Snakes

Snakes carved are predominantly *liru* (a generic term for all venomous snakes) or *kuniya*, (python). Small ones can be *kuyi* (legless lizard). Sometimes they are *wanampi* (rainbow serpent).

There are thirteen species of snakes found in the central and western desert: two are non-venomous pythons and three are blind snakes. The remaining eight are venomous. The most commonly found species is mulga or king brown, (*Pseudonaja australis*), a highly defensive snake that is found in many populated areas and widely distributed across many parts of Australia. The mulga snake has the largest recorded venom output of any snake in the world.



Billy Cooley, *Liru*, c.1999. *Itara* (river red gum), 1770 x 220 x 630mm.

Billy Cooley has a passion for carving snakes. Apart from helping his wife Lulu with the raw shaping of some of her bowls and music sticks, Billy says he has always carved his snakes. He started to watch out for naturally occurring serpent forms in the twisting roots and branches of various trees.

He wanted to make his sculptures as life-like as possible and made a careful study of the different scale patterns of desert serpents. Over the years he developed four etching styles for different snakes. Although they are inspired by the desert species, he explains it's from his mother's country at Borroloola that he is related to the Water Serpent Dreaming. It is Billy's ambition to continue with his carving as long as he is able.



Stephen Fox, Billy & Lulu Cooley at Mutitjulu discussing proposed *Punuku Tjukurpa* exhibition, March 2013. Photographer: Julie Fielke.

Activity

Find the twisted roots or branch of a tree.
Carve it so the shape is smooth and lifelike.
Paint or carve patterns to make it look like a snake, animal or insect.

Punu for trade

This *walka* board by Niningka Lewis depicts people selling *punu* to tourists on the side of the road just outside Mulga Park station. It shows how people would sell their work before the establishment of the art centre, Maruku Arts. While it was an enterprising activity, selling *punu* from the side of the road was an irregular event and did not always provide great financial return to the artists.

Anangu also sold *punu* along the old Ghan railway line and on the southern line near Ceduna, Yalata and Ooldea as early as the 1920s. They also sold on the roadside to the east of Uluru from the 1960s (Angas Downs and Curtin Springs Stations).



Niningka Lewis, *Early days: tourists stop at Mulga Park, Anangu sitting with the punu*. 2013. Acrylic paint on plywood, 300 x 400 x 8mm.

Later, with the bitumen road to Uluru installed in the 1980s, it became clear to the artists that there was a growing number of travellers coming to Uluru, a captive and growing audience for their work. The making of artefacts and adapted crafts for sale began to evolve at communities such as Ernabella, Amata and Pipalyatjara as more tourists began to pass through.

Punu Ngura (home or place of wood), a series of old traditional shades, were built near the site of the current ranger station and closer to the base of Uluru. This became the selling point for artists of the Maruku collective and a place where they could demonstrate the making of *punu*.

In 1981 one of the first informal tent exhibitions was held at the base of Uluru when artists from Amata packed everything into a convoy of cars and trucks and travelled over to sell their work.

Visitors could learn about *Anangu* culture. Maruku Arts did not belong to any one community but instead became a collective of members coming from regions across the central desert and Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, Ngaatjatjarra Lands and Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

For more information see the essay by Stephen Fox in the *Punuku Tjukurpa* Exhibition Catalogue.

Reference:

Stephen Fox, *Punuku Tjukurpa* Exhibition Catalogue.

Activity

Watch the video *Punu Palyantja Woodcarving* (1989).

<http://indigitube.com.au/bush-medicine/item/699>

This video shows the woodcarving industry, how Aboriginal people make their wooden artwork, and how it gets sold. Look at a map of the central and western desert. Find some of the communities mentioned above on a map. Calculate how far people had to travel to sell their artwork. How far do you travel to do your daily and weekly activities?

THE ARTISTS

Mr Kenta

c.1935 - 2004, western desert



Mr Kenta, *Wati*, c.1993. *Ininti* (batwing coral tree), acrylic paint, wool, 780 x 140 x 165mm.

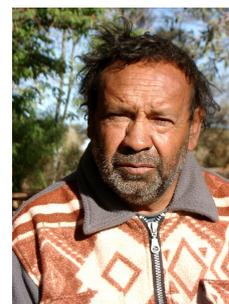
Mr Kenta was born and raised in his ancestral country. His traditional education involved learning the surrounding country and its creation law, water sources and how to carve tools for hunting. As a young man he travelled Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Pintupi, Walpiri and Arrente Lands throughout Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. In the late 1960s, after much lobbying by the Pitjantjatjara people, a government funded community, Kaltukatjara or Docker River, was established in the far southwest corner of the Northern Territory and Mr Kenta was able to move back home to his traditional lands. He worked on the

building projects in this and many of the other new communities across his lands.

As an artist, Mr Kenta was well known for his innovative and imaginative carvings, inspired not just by the *Tjukurpa* of his ancestors but also by the new experiences contemporary life brought him.

Billy Cooley

b.1952, Soudan Station



Billy Cooley. Image courtesy Maruku Arts.

Billy Cooley was born on a cattle station near the NT and Queensland borders and lives with his wife and six children on their homeland near the community of Amata. He has been a very versatile stockman, experienced in yard building, fencing and heavy machinery, however his main passion is carving snakes in his spare time. Now retired, he can concentrate on his carving and also works closely with his wife, Lulu, helping her to make *piti* or traditional

bowls. Together they have passed their carving and burning design knowledge onto their children and grandchildren, some of whom are also represented in *Punuku Tjukurpa*.

My mother was from Borroloola and my father was a cattle drover from Queensland. My family ancestry from Brisbane includes Chinese and Irish as well as Aboriginal. I was born at Soudan Cattle Station near Cammoweal.

Billy Cooley



Billy repairing an artwork with *kiti* by the fire, 2014. Photographer: Alice Buscombe.

Ivy Inkatji

1944 - 2001

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands



Ivy Inkatji, *Tingkanku ngalkuni*, 1999. *Itara* (river red gum), 345 x 50 x 46mm.

Ivy Inkatji was an experienced craftswoman who worked closely with her husband Gordon to create some of the finest work ever sold through Maruku Arts. They were both instrumental in the establishment and running of Maruku. Ivy lived on their homeland of David's Well, to the west of Ernabella on the Pitjantjatjara Lands in South Australia. Her carving is distinguished by its highly finished forms and elaborate *walka* (design work). The couple worked together on all aspects of the carving from chopping the raw timber from the creek beds of their homelands to sitting by the fire to brand the finished carvings with *walka*.

Joanne Cooley

b.1980, Alice Springs



Joanne Cooley. Image courtesy Maruku Arts.

Joanne Cooley is the daughter of Billy and Lulu Cooley, a renowned husband and wife carving partnership. Their skills have been passed on to them through the *Tjukurpa*, the Law, and way of life governing their country. They have raised their children in this tradition. Joanne has long assisted her parents, accompanying them on trips to collect wood and then helping to etch some of the design work under her mother's instructions. She has been making and selling carvings in her own right since about 2001. She specialises in making *walka* boards, combining paint with the burnt *walka*.

Niningka Lewis

b. c.1945 between Areyonga and Tempe Downs



Niningka Lewis. Image courtesy Maruku Arts.

Niningka Lewis was born in the 1950s between the mission settlement of Areyonga and Tempe Downs cattle station in the Northern Territory. Her parents were among the first generation of *Anangu* to settle in the community of Ernabella which was established by the mission. Niningka grew up attending school there and making regular family trips throughout her traditional lands.

Niningka lives in Ernabella where she continues to create distinctive art works at Ernabella Arts, painting and making *tjanpi* (basketry), *punu* (wooden artefacts), *mukata* (beanies) and more recently *walka* boards. Niningka is known for her distinctive and unusual art works and has had a number of solo exhibitions.

Tjana iriti kamilu tjuṅanku kanyiningi, wira munu piti kapiku, mai, kukaku. Punu nganampa tjuṅa palya ananyi tjana nyankuntjaku. Wirunya nyangatja. Tjana nyakula kulilpai, tjana alatjitu palyalpai munu memory tjuṅa tjana kanyilpai. Ka tjinguru tjana nyakula kulira ngurilku kuwari palyantja tjuṅa buy-amilantjaku kanyintjikitjangku.

In the past, every grandmother had her wooden scoops and carrying bowls for water and bush foods. It is fitting that our *punu* is travelling around to be seen. This is a good thing. People can see and understand how things are made and that we have a lot of memories (in our collection). And maybe they will see it and decide to search for carvings being made nowadays that they can buy to keep for themselves.

Niningka Lewis

Rolley Mintuma

b.1943 Victory Downs



Rolley Mintuma. Image courtesy Maruku Arts.

Rolley Mintuma's traditional country lies to the south west of Uluru and he has lived in the community of Mutitjula for the last fifteen years. He has contributed much to the contemporary art and traditional carving done there. As well as painting

and animal carvings, Rolley is known for his incised weapons. Rolley draws on traditional techniques, but creates highly original contemporary artworks in his own style. One of his major themes is the carved *kuniya* (python), a creation ancestor of great significance for Uluru. The *kuniya* below was done with his wife Pixie Brown.

When he is not concentrating on his artwork, Rolley is often active as a spokesperson and consultant in the interpretation of traditional culture and *Tjukurpa* (traditional Law). He has also worked as a guide, and *inma* (ceremonial) dancer. Rolley has performed in many films including *Tracks* (2001). See resources section.

*Uwa palya, ngayulu pukularinyi punu palyalpai ngayulu.
Nyura ngayuku punuku mukuringanyi, wirura nyakula
payamilala.*

I really enjoy making carvings, and if you are interested in my work, have a good look and buy it!

Rolley Mintuma.



Rolley Mintuma, *Kuniya*, 1998. *Itara* (river red gum), 632 x 40 x 180mm.

THE EXHIBITION

How did the exhibition come about?

Punuku Tjukurpa has been developed by Artback NT together with Maruku Arts and is the first touring exhibition of works from the Maruku Arts archive. The title of the exhibition, *Punuku Tjukurpa*, refers to the story and the Law behind the works.

The intentions of the exhibition are to show a variety of works by three generations of artists and to teach people about *Anangu* culture.

The Maruku archive is a body of work that has been collected over many years and is known as *punu irititja munu wirunya tjuta kanyintjaku* (old and good carvings to keep), or *Nyangatja Punu Ara* (This Carving Story).

We have a lot of memories in our collection. Looking at *punu* brings back memories of old people, memories of good times going out collecting *punu*, sitting around fires carving and burning designs with hot wires. *Punu* evokes the stories of the *Tjukurpa* but also good memories of family, of artists and the strength of their creative talent. As people have passed away, as people have created new and exciting work, pieces have been added to the collection, to this bank of memories.

Niningka Lewis

As exhibition curator Stephen Fox explains, there are some very contemporary, non-traditional pieces featured in this exhibition as well as traditional artefacts.

Punu is not a static thing. It can also be full of innovation and reveal the creativity of new ideas. No one better than Niningka Lewis can illustrate this with two new pieces she calls her 'ceramics'. 'I was confused at first when Niningka said this. Then I saw the work, a carved teapot and a carved vase all in wood and painted in a style representative of recent Ernabella ceramics. What a delight!

What I enjoy most about this collection is that it still sits in the community, in a place easily accessible by members of the artists' family. This was its original purpose. While out at Mutitjula in November 2013 working on this exhibition, it was great to hear Ronnie Allen talking about his brother, Alan Kenta's work. He was really happy to see his brother's work, he was pleased his brother's work was being looked after. He commented on how his brother was a clever man capable of carving many things and carving these fantastic figures like no one else, then he said, 'I love my brother you know, he been doing everything, I know that my brother been doing 'em like that all the time.' That was a great moment to share with Ronnie as he took care in handling his brothers work and spoke with much admiration for his brother's *punu* - that is what this collection is about.

Stephen Fox

The role of the curator

The exhibition curator is the person who is in charge of overseeing (curating) an exhibition: the curator decides which work will be shown, the title and the content of the exhibition and the order in which it will be seen. The curator might write or edit material such as a catalogue, room brochure and explanatory text panels.

The curator of this exhibition is Stephen Fox who was Director of Maruku Arts from 1997 until 2006. During that time he worked closely with *Anangu* mentor, Walter Pukutiwara and learned to understand the cultural importance of the *Tjukurpa* behind the objects.

Stephen Fox worked closely with the artists and Traditional Owners to ensure that this exhibition is a true representation of *Anangu* culture. The main idea was for *Punuku Tjukurpa* to be a celebration of innovation in woodcarving, including many forms of *punu*.

The curation of *Punuku Tjukurpa* has therefore been a collaborative process. Stephen Fox has worked with the artists of Maruku, in particular Chairperson, Billy Cooley, his daughter Joanne Cooley, as well as Kathy Tozer, Clive Scollay and Artback NT visual art's staff. Everyone has brought their unique skills and knowledge to this superb exhibition.

Curators are often required to research the artists and artworks to find out the story and history behind them. In this case Stephen Fox, Artback NT and Maruku Arts have spent many hours talking to people and documenting the works.

Another role of the curator can be to write a curatorial essay. This is an opportunity for the curator to explain the exhibition and ideas behind it, to provide a context for the exhibition and discuss the artists involved. The main job for the curator is to help explain why the works are important for people to see.

The reason there are so many 'unknown' artists in the exhibition has do with the change in the Aboriginal art market since the 1980s, from an informal and mostly minimal documentation process, to a much more thorough documentation and certification of the artworks produced today.

INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS



Interpretive sign, c.1998. Paint on metal, 500 x 300mm.

Every culture has different ways of communicating. In order to work with someone from a different background or culture in a respectful way it is important to understand how people might see, value or express things differently. Protocols are the standards of behaviour that people use to show respect to each other.

Principles and Protocols

Respect

The rights of Indigenous people to own and control their heritage, including Indigenous images, designs, stories and other cultural expressions must be respected.

Indigenous control

Indigenous people have the right to determine their own cultural affairs and the expression and distribution of their cultural material. There are many ways in which these rights can be respected in the creation, production and exhibition of art. One significant way is to discuss how Indigenous control over a project will be exercised. This raises the issue of who can represent language groups and who can give clearances of traditionally and collectively owned material.

Communication, consultation and consent

Communication and consultation are critical in Indigenous visual arts projects. Consent is necessary for the reproduction of Indigenous visual art, and if traditional communal designs are included, consent may be required from Traditional Owners.

Communication is most effective if each group:

- is aware of the way in which their own culture affects how they see an issue
- endeavours to understand and build awareness of the other culture
- patiently unravels misunderstandings which arise out of cultural differences
- finds the right people within a community to consult.

Interpretation, integrity and authenticity

Indigenous artists and their communities need to have control over how their cultural heritage is presented. The presentation of a work includes its interpretation, integrity and authenticity.

Secrecy and confidentiality

Some Indigenous cultural material is not suitable for wide dissemination on the grounds of secrecy and confidentiality. Those putting together arts projects must first discuss any restrictions on use with the relevant Indigenous groups.

Attribution and copyright

Copyright laws are the main laws in Australia that govern the use, production and dissemination of original artistic works. Copyright protects all art forms including, art, music, photography and film. Artworks can be reproduced only with the written permission of the artist and only for a specific purpose. Permission must be sought each time the work is reproduced. Artists are also entitled to royalty or copyright payments for the reproduction of their artwork each time it is reproduced.

Indigenous people have the right to be attributed for the use of their cultural heritage material. They also need to be acknowledged as owners of their knowledge and information and should share in benefits generated from the use of their cultural stories.

Proper returns and royalties

Indigenous people are entitled to share in the benefits and receive proper returns and royalties for the use of their cultural heritage material.

Continuing cultures

Cultures are dynamic and ever-evolving, and the protocols within each group and community can change over time. Consultation is an ongoing process. It is important to consider how to maintain relationships for future consultations. This might include a process for consultation or payment at a later date for further uses of the work that were not initially envisaged.

References:

- Protocols for producing Indigenous Australian visual art*, Australia Council for the Arts
<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about/protocols-for-working-with-indigenous-artists/>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols* – Oxfam Australia
<http://www.reconciliation.org.au/raphub/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/respect-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-protocols-oxfam-australia.pdf>
- A short guide to visitors to remote communities* – Tourism Australia
http://www.sacredland.org/PDFs/Aborigine_Tourism_Guide.pdf
- The Indigenous Art Code*
The Indigenous Art Code is a system to preserve and promote ethical trading in Indigenous art.
<http://www.indigenousartcode.org/>

Artback NT

Artback NT is the Northern Territory's visual and performing arts touring agency.

Connecting people and place through arts development and touring.

Artback NT's visual art program works with individual artists, curators and communities to develop and tour exhibitions which promote the artistic excellence of Territory artists to a national audience, as well as to remote and regional communities within the NT.

Artback NT is extremely proud to present *Punuku Tjurkupa*, the first touring exhibition of works from the Maruku Arts archive. This has been an extraordinary project in so many ways. The archive is a living and ever-changing collection and it has touched all staff who have been fortunate to be able to participate.

<http://www.artbacknt.com.au/>



RESOURCES

Video

Desert Tracks, Karli Jalangu- Boomerang today (2004)

Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)

Nganampa Anwernekenhe Series

<http://caama.com.au/desert-tracks-1997>

Head, shoulders knees and toes song in Pitjantjatjara:

On a picnic in the West Macdonnells these *tjitji mankurpa* (three kids) were showing how clever they were with the 'head, shoulders knees and toes' song in Pitjantjatjara.

<http://www.indigitube.com.au/kids/item/47>

Indigitube

Indigitube is a video, radio and community TV streaming resource that promotes and celebrates remote Indigenous education, talent, culture, language, history and innovation, operated by Indigenous Community Television Limited (ICTV) and Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA).

<http://www.indigitube.com.au/>

Knowing birds – identifying Pitjantjatjara names for birds

This video was made with the Central Land Council and involves the CLC rangers & Traditional Owners from Docker River and Mutitjulu as they work together to give Pitjantjatjara names to the many birds of that area.

<http://www.indigitube.com.au/video/item/724>

Language Show

A video translation of Pitjantjatjara terms, names and places in English language.

<http://www.indigitube.com.au/kids/item/43>

Lungkarta

The women artists of Warakurna tell the story of the Blue Tongue Lizard Dreaming and the kids listen, and respect the areas story, and dance at the end.

<http://indigitube.com.au/video/item/375>

Mutitjulu - One Love - video

The young people of the community record & perform Bob Marley's 'One Love'.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfZj2lipW7M>

Should We Climb Uluru?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImGNik7IOpU>

Stories from Country - Mutitjulu Community

Hear about Mutitjulu. This is a community profile in the Stories from Country series aimed at health professionals considering working in remote Australia.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCRWEepwWDU>

Tracks

This film tells the incredible true story of Robyn Davidson, a young woman who in 1977 undertook a perilous solo trek across the stunning Australian outback.

<http://tracks-movie.com/>

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park - The people and the place

<http://www.parksaustralia.gov.au/uluru/people-and-place.html>

Punu Day

This is a video in Pitjantjatjara language about a trip to cut wood for carving made in Indulkana on the APY lands showing people finding wood to carve their spears other useful things.

<http://www.indigitube.com.au/video/item/585>

Punu Palyantja Woodcarving (1989)

This video shows the woodcarving industry, how Aboriginal people make their wooden artwork, and how it gets sold. From 1989 the video shows *punu* from the initial wood collection to Peter Yates from Maruku buying the carvings the way they are still bought today.

<http://indigitube.com.au/bush-medicine/item/699>

Wiltja Palyantja

This video in Pitjantjatjara language shows how to make a *wiltja* (shelter) with Tjuwilya & Pantjiti.

<http://indigitube.com.au/bush-medicine/item/677>

Websites

Artback NT

<http://artbacknt.com.au>

Maruku Arts

<http://www.maruku.com.au>

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Notes

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/national-parks/uluru-kata-tjuta-national-park/culture-and-history/anangu-language>

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park Knowledge Handbook

<http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/d97e9851-014c-4bd0-96c8-9b05c59da72a/files/handbook.pdf>

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park – Knowledge for Tour Guides

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/ulurureadings.pdf>

World Heritage Places – Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/uluru>

Tjukurpa - National Parks Australia

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/tourism/uluru/downloads/Indigenous%20cultural%20values%20-%20Tjukurpa.pdf>

Wapar

Wapar is the Yankunytjatjara word for Ancestral or creation stories.

The website features maps, dictionary and videos about Yankunytjatjara people.

<http://wapar.com.au/site/dictionary>

Birds in Back Yards

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/>

Desert Knowledge for Kids and Students

<http://www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au/kids/desert/>

Books

Bushfires & Bushtucker: Aboriginal Plant Use in Central Australia, Peter Latz, IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2005.

Desert Crafts, Anangu Maruku Punu, Jennifer Isaacs, Doubleday Sydney, 1992.

Kupi-kupi and the Girl, Daphne Punytjina Burton, Magabala Books, 2000.

Learning as a Pitjantjatjara Child, Andy Tjilari, Anangu Education Services, SA, 2006.

Maralinga: The Anangu Story, Yalata and Oak Valley Communities with Christobel Mattingly, Allen and Unwin, 2009.

Ngaanyatjarra Art of the lands, Tim Acker & John Carty (eds), University of Western Australia Publishing, 2012.

Ngaanyatjarra-Ngaatjatjara to English Dictionary, compiled by Ameer Glass Dorothy Hackett, IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2003.

Nyuntu Ninti, Bob Randall and Melanie Hogan, HarperCollins, 2011.

The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture, Sylvia Kleinert and Margo Neal (eds), Oxford University Press, 2000.

(Maruku artists talk about working with tourists at Uluru)

Painting the Song, Kaltjiti Artists of the Sand Dune Country, Dianna K James, McCulloch and McCulloch, 2009.

(Sections on *punu* and *walka* specifically for children)

The Pitjantjatjara and Their Crafts, Peter Brokensha, Aboriginal Arts Board, Sydney, 1975.

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary, Cliff Goddard (ed), IAD Press, Alice Springs, 1996

Punu, Yankunytjatjara Plant Use, Cliff Goddard and A. Kalotas, IAD Press, Sydney, 1988.

Punuku Tjukurpa exhibition catalogue.

GLOSSARY

Anangu: people in general, everyone. Generally used as a collective name of Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra speaking Aboriginal people of the central and western deserts.

APY: *Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara*. The names of the two main dialect groups that inhabit the northwest of South Australia. Also the name given to the Aboriginal Land Council based at Umuwa near the Musgrave Ranges, South Australia.

Inma: traditional dance and song.

Kalaya: emu.

Kapi: water.

Kulata: barbed hunting spear.

Kuniya: the woma (*Aspites ramsayi*), a kind of python. It is non-venomous and edible and is an important totemic animal.

Kunmanara: Pitjantjatjara for 'one who's name cannot be mentioned'. This refers to the name of a recently deceased person.

Liru: a venomous snake e.g. mulga snake and western brown snake.

Maku: witchetty grub, (*Xylutes luc*).

Malu: red kangaroo, (*Macropus rufus*).

Mimpu: a large, deep water-carrying bowl.

Minyma: *Anangu* woman, woman. Referring to a woman with children.

Miru: a multi-purpose men's tool, primarily a spear-thrower, but also used as a meat knife and a fire saw.

Ngintaka: perentie lizard, (*Varanus giganteus*).

Piti: large bowl used to carry food and water.

Punu: wood, tree, timber, wooden object/s.

Tjala: honey ant, *Camponotus inflatus*.

Tjanpi: grass, spinifex, *Triodia* spp.

Tjara: long thin hardwood shield.

Tjilpi: a male with senior or elder status; also 'white hair'.

Tjitji: child.

Tjukurpa: Aboriginal Law, 'dreaming'.

Tjutinypa: long, narrow club often fitted with a quartz cutting edge in the handle and is used primarily for hunting.

Walka: design, drawing, writing, print, any meaningful marks.

Waru: fire, flame, heat.

Wati: senior *Anangu* man, man.

Wiltja: shade shelter, shade.

Definitions sourced from:

Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara to English Dictionary, revised second edition, 2006, IAD Press, Alice Springs

The Ara Irititja Project

<http://www.irititja.com/index.html>

CURRICULUM LINKS

Punuku Tjukurpa links with the Australian National Curriculum from Foundation to Year 10 through:

- English
- History
- Geography
- The Arts

Punuku Tjukurpa promotes student engagement through the exhibition and related activities. These activities are designed to enhance self-expression, self-directed learning, cooperation, social understanding and cultural awareness with a focus on *Anangu* culture and expression.

Cross-curriculum priorities

Punuku Tjukurpa is aligned with cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures through a focus on:

- Country/Place
- Culture
- People

Australian National Curriculum General Capabilities:

- Literacy
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Intercultural understanding

Through intercultural understanding, students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. The capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.