

# YULYURLU

Lorna Fencer Napurrurla

presented by  
Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring  
& Mimi Arts and Crafts Aboriginal Corporation



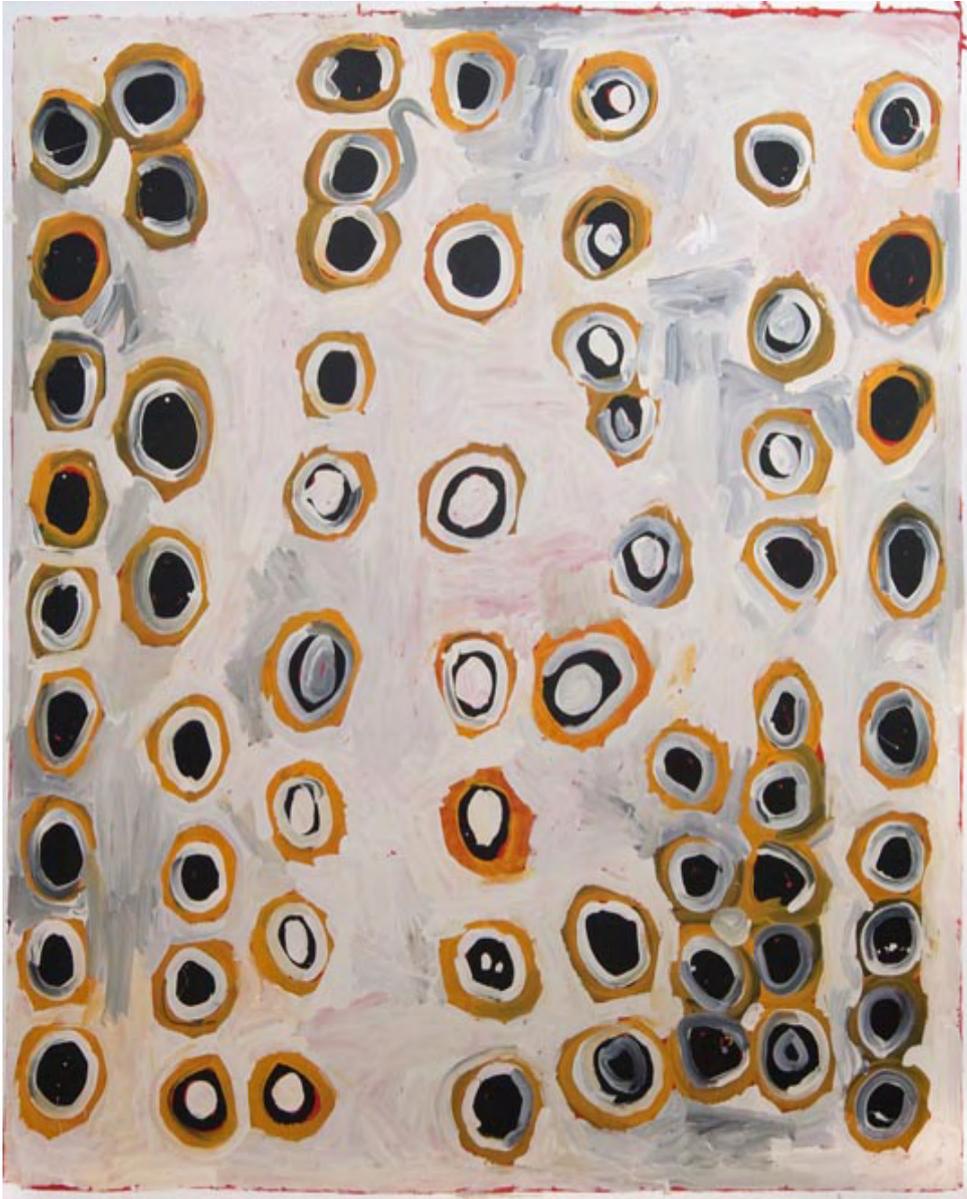
## **EXHIBITION OUTLINE**

Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring in conjunction with Mimi Arts and Crafts, present a solo exhibition of the well known Warlpiri artist Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla(c.1924-2006).

This is the first major exhibition of Yulyurlu's work and will trace her development as a highly original artist over twenty years of practice.

The ultimate aim of the exhibition is to highlight the importance of Yulyurlu as a master painter within the Lajamanu region and to position her within the broader framework of central desert art movement.

It will be one of only a few curated solo exhibition dedicated to a female desert artist.



Lorna Fencer  
*Untitled* 1997  
Acrylic on canvas 192 x 173 cm

## **NATIONAL PROFILE OF THE ARTIST**

During her lifetime Lorna Fencer achieved considerable national acclaim. She first began painting on canvas in 1986 when the Warnayaka Art centre was established at Lajamanu. In 1997 she won the *Conrad Jupiters Art Prize* at the Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland and in 1998 she was invited to participate in the triennial *John McCaughey Memorial Art Award* at the National Gallery of Victoria.

She has been represented in many solo and group selling exhibitions during her lifetime including the prestigious *Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Art Award*. She was also profiled in important curated shows including the permanent Aboriginal Gallery exhibition, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory 2005-2009; *Colour Power*, The Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004; *John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1998; *Women's Body Paint*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1997, *Paint Up Big: Warlpiri Women's Art from Lajamanu*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 1991, *Aboriginal Art and Spirituality*, High Court of Australia Canberra, 1991; *Aboriginal Art*, Australian Embassy, Washington, USA, 1991.

After moving to Katherine in the late 1990s she was a major force in the revival of Mimi Aboriginal Arts and Crafts and remained as it's most committed and high profile artist until her death in 2006.



Lorna Fencer  
*Yam Dreaming 2004*  
Acrylic on paper 105x76 cm

## EXHIBITION RATIONALE

Lorna Fencer was arguably the best known Warlpiri artist from the Katherine/Lajamanu region in the Top End of the Northern Territory. Even so, her pioneering role within the Warlpiri art tradition has never been fully appreciated. This was largely the result of the erratic marketing of her work between the collapse of the Warnayaka Art Centre who represented her, and her final period with Mimi Arts and Crafts in Katherine.



Lorna Fencer  
*Boomerang 1998*  
Acrylic on canvas 150 x 100 cm

The proposed solo exhibition would:

Position her as a major force in the contemporary Indigenous art movement

Provide a more comprehensive understanding about her individual expression and her relationship to overall developments in the desert art movement



While group shows of Indigenous artists proliferate there have been very few non-commercial exhibitions about individual female desert painters. The only artist to be honoured in such a way to date is the famous Utopia artist, Emily Kngwarreye in two survey shows at the Queensland Art Gallery and National Museum of Australia respectively.

Stylistically, Lorna's work was consistently equated with Kngwarreye's during her lifetime, even though it is doubtful that these women from different regions in the Territory were even aware of each other's work.



Both were senior law women whose strength of character is reflected in highly personal styles that departed radically from the classic iconography of desert art.

When Lorna started painting in 1986 her work tended to bright colours and an asymmetry that became more pronounced in her more mature paintings. Her designs became looser using broad gestural brush strokes and a rich over layering of paint. The energy and vibrancy of her work created considerable interest in the market place and this has been sustained since her death.



Lorna Fencer  
*Bush Foods*  
Prints on paper

## LORNA FENCER'S IMAGERY

Lorna's work has often been appraised as 'abstract art' even though the application of such western terminology is not useful in accounting for the particular historic and cultural conditions that informed her work.

Her authority over ceremonial imagery gave her the confidence to be experimental. Her geographic mobility and independence also exposed her to a range of different marketing opportunities and this was no doubt influential in encouraging her individual expression.



Lorna Fencer  
Summer Yam c.1999  
Acrylic on linen 147 x 184 cm



Lorna Fencer  
*Yarla Yam Dreaming* 1997  
Acrylic on canvas 200 x 150 cm

On close inspection it's apparent that Lorna uses a template for the particular Dreaming she represents. Some are iconic in the way they physically resemble the subject depicted, or refer to the ceremonial body designs related to a particular dreaming.

For each set of ancestral stories she developed a distinctive oeuvre: the energetic stippling for the Caterpillar Dreaming, the flurry of curved icons for the Boomerang story, the floral Bush Tucker motifs and the sinuous linear designs relating to her Water and Snake Dreamings.

The exhibition and catalogue will look at the specifics of her iconography and the influences that allowed her to individualise her work within the Warlpiri painting tradition.

The Warlpiri artists have been involved in painting since the 1970s and are the most dominant desert group in terms of geographic spread. Their involvement in the Lajamanu painting movement is an important and distinctive chapter in the broader Warlpiri western desert art movement.

## EXHIBITION CONTENT

The exhibition will be comprised of works on canvas, prints and paintings on paper, and a few material culture items such as coolamons and digging sticks, similar to those she made prior to becoming a painter. It is envisaged that there will be around 60 works and all will be appropriately framed for installation. Several show cases may be required for the three-dimensional items.



Lorna Fencer  
*My Country* 1999  
Acrylic on canvas 100 x 150 cm



Lorna Fencer  
*Bush potato* 2004  
Acrylic on canvas 150 x 100 cm

## **EXHIBITION COSTS**

The proposed exhibition fee will be \$3,000 - \$4,000 depending on final freight costs for each venue.

The fee is contingent on Mimi Arts and Crafts being successful in obtaining Visions of Australia funds.

The tour would begin in November 2011 for a proposed 2 year period.

Confirmation from potential venues will be required prior to the next Visions of Australia Touring Grant round on 1 st April, 2011.

## **EXHIBITION CONTACTS**

### TOUR MANAGEMENT CONTACTS

Marg Bowman  
Manager, Visual Arts

Neridah Stockley  
Project Officer

Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring

PO Box 4582 Alice Springs NT 0871

Telephone: (08) 8953 5941, Facsimile: (08) 8952 6595

Email: [alicesprings@artbacknt.com.au](mailto:alicesprings@artbacknt.com.au)

Website: [www.artbacknt.com.au](http://www.artbacknt.com.au)

### CURATORIAL CONTACT

Margie West

21 Phoenix St Nightcliff NT 0801

Phone/Facsimilie: 08 89 481146 Mobile: 040 888 9695

Email: [margiewest8@bigpond.com](mailto:margiewest8@bigpond.com)

**Attachment A**

**VISIONS OF AUSTRALIA**

**VENUE CONFIRMATION IN SUPPORT OF AUSTRALIAN TOURING EXHIBITION**

**Applicant:** Please have this form completed by the Venue Director/ Manager of each venue and include it with Your Application to Visions of Australia (not as part of your Support Material). By completing and signing this form the Venue is confirming a commitment to receive the Exhibition if funds are offered from the Visions of Australia Program. This form is available on our website at [www.arts.gov.au/visions](http://www.arts.gov.au/visions)

**Name of Applicant Organisation:**

**Name of Venue:**

**Name of proposed Exhibition:**

**Opening date: closing date:**

**Venue Director/ Manager:**

**Postal address of Venue:**

**State/Territory: postcode:**

**Street address of Venue (if different from postal):**

**State/Territory: postcode:**

**Telephone:**

**Fax:**

**website and/or email address:**

**Commitment to take the exhibition (tick one box)**

- high (confirmed booking).
- dates confirmed subject to funding.

**I confirm that this venue is committed to displaying the Exhibition named above.**

**Signature of Venue Director/ Manager**

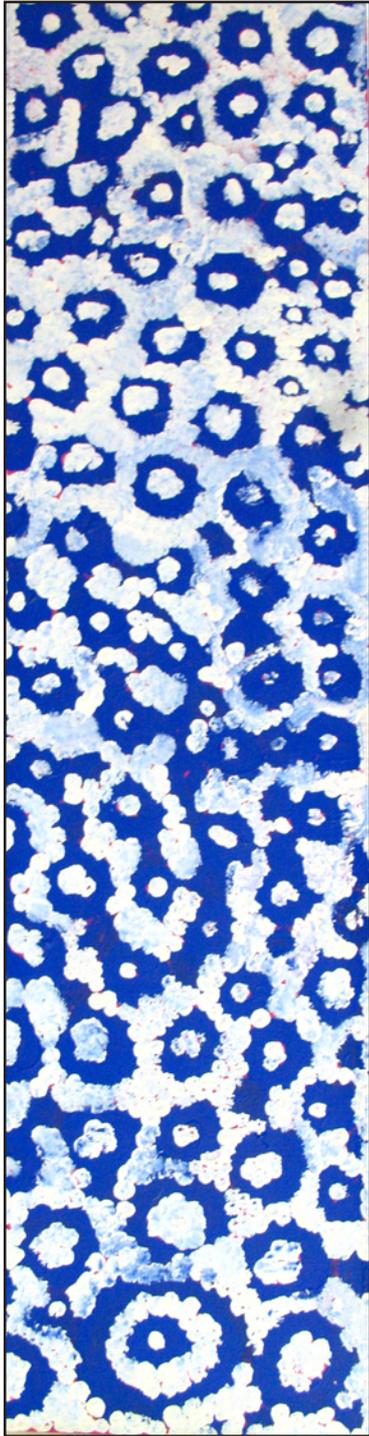
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**Print Name:** .....

**Position:** .....

**Date:**.....

**Visions of Australia Venue Confirmation – (in support of Visions Touring Application)**



Lorna Fencer  
*Bush Plum* 2005  
Acrylic on canvas 121 x 31 cm



Lorna Fencer  
*Ngapa* 2002  
Acrylic on canvas 84 x 38 cm