

Art, words and photos from
Central Australian Aboriginal Art Centres

Quarterly edition, Summer 2021

THE DESART RADAR



Culture First.

Supporting Aboriginal Art Centres
of Central Australia

Art Centres Online

A virtual event of story-telling direct from the desert
November 2021

Film series

With 2020 paving the way for digital advances for artists and their art centres, Desart harnessed this creative momentum by developing a new virtual event of story-telling, elevating the celebration and diversity of Aboriginal contemporary artistic practices.

Art Centres Online saw Desart visit communities across the regions to record and capture art centres' stories and practices through film. Speaking from Country, artists shared the stories of their work, culture and communities.

This program of 20 short films, took art lovers from across the world into the art centres and onto the homelands to connect with these story-keepers.

The collection of stories extended a wealth of lived experience, reflections on the creative process; the landmark Uluru hand-back and an eye-opening account of a family's experience and effects of the second bomb test in Maralinga. Art Centre's own films were also screened speaking of old day and new days and the beauty of Country after rain.

Generating 75,000 views across all platforms, these stories allowed everyone everywhere to experience the celebration of Central Australian Aboriginal art practices and cultural identity.

Films are available to view @ desart.com.au

Image: Kunmanara Jangala Carroll.
Photo: Stephanie Simcox.



Kunmanara Jangala Carroll: 2021 Jam Factory Icon

This year Ernabella Arts celebrated Kunmanara Jangala Carroll after being selected for the Jam Factory's annual Icon exhibition – the first Indigenous artist to be a part of this series.

This annual Icon exhibition celebrates the achievements of South Australia's most influential visual artists working in craft-based media. Concerned with passing on cultural knowledge, Kunmanara Carroll's paternal homeland and deep knowledge of this land fed his beautifully intricate paintings and ceramics work.

As well as a stunning sold out exhibition, a beautiful tapestry was made from one of his designs at the Australian Tapestry Workshop and a magnificent monograph was also produced that was launched by the SA Premier Stephen Marshall. The exhibition is now touring regional centres for the next two years.



Image: Jennifer Purvis in the studio. Image courtesy the art centre.

Utopia Art Centre making their mark

Since opening the doors in October 2020, Utopia Art Centre has forged ahead, making their mark and building on the successes of its compelling and distinctive art history.

There is much to celebrate in Utopia's inaugural year, most notably the acquisition of two works by ArtBank from the art centre's first exhibition, as well as engaging a core group of 60 emerging and established painters, both in the art centre and through bush studio programs.

Established to empower artists in the region, artist and board member Sam Jampijinpa Mbitjana Dixon says, "old people gave us that power a long time ago and now we're making strong canvas here. This is our art story now."

Art Centre Manager Sophia Lunn said the year's success is a "testament to the community support and the strong cultural history of the region."

A temporary website has been established as well as an online shop with a first look at the exciting works coming out of the art centre.

www.utopiaartcentre.com.au



"What we are painting, you know, are our family legacies. What belongs to us, from our fathers, the Country, you know, and Dreaming story from our fathers. What belongs to us. We all do this. We all do this in the right way." – George Tjungurrayi

Image: George Tjungurrayi at work in Papunya Tula's remote studio at Walungurru/Kintore. Photo: Desart.

Main Image: Desert Woman with Moustache, Coolman and Pretty Clothes. Photo by Mic Walters, courtesy the art centre. Inset: Cody Edger, Curator Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at Art Gallery NSW accepting the award from Jenny Kee on behalf of Rhonda. Photo courtesy the art centre.

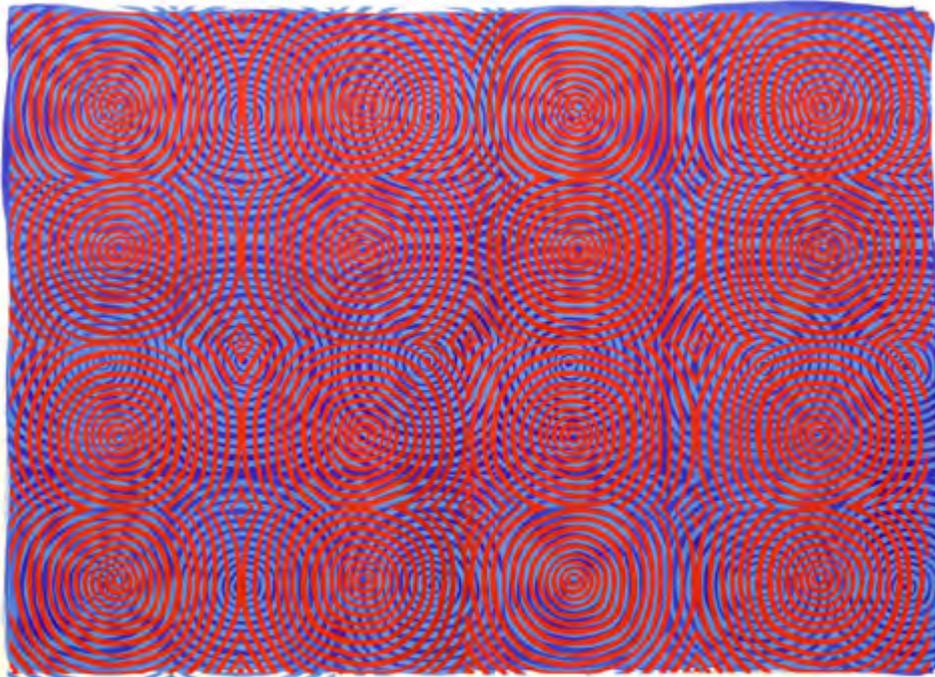


Congratulations Rhonda Sharpe!

Rhonda has been named winner of this year's Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize becoming only the second Indigenous artist to win this prestigious award in 20 years!

An incredible woman and artist.





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Desart Christmas MarketPlace

Following the film series, the Christmas MarketPlace was four days of big works and big stories.

The MarketPlace presented an exciting range of works from 27 art centres in many styles and mediums, as well as first looks at exciting new initiatives by art centres.

Total sales achieved over the Christmas MarketPlace were \$364,000 with 849 works sold and over 14,500 virtual visits.

Excitingly, around 2,500 people joined us from overseas, specifically America and England, and there were also a large proportion of new visitors, increasing audience and knowledge on how culture is kept strong through Desart member art centres.

100% of all sales go back to the artists, supporting families, jobs, community and the next generation of Aboriginal artists.

Ngurra Kutjuwarra...On Country Together

This year saw Warlayirti Artists renew their focus on returning people to Country.

Most of the people who live in Balgo are not living on their traditional lands. Maintaining connection to Country through these trips is so important for rejuvenating spirits and keeping culture strong.

In a series of four trips, artists wanted to “take their old people out on Country and grow young people with the cultural knowledge to become tomorrow’s leaders.”

One trip started in Balgo, through Yagga Yagga, Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay), Nyinmi, Kunawarritji and back to Balgo, a total of 2500km. The group met up with Papunya Tula and KJ (Martu) mob, reconnecting people with families and their Country. Another trip involved some filming at Sturt Creek with Rachel Perkins for the upcoming series on the Frontier Wars.



“This is all the Country we paint; all the Country we are from. Our Elders haven’t been to this Country for a long time, and some of their kids and grandkids have never stepped foot on their ancestral land.”



Photos by Lucinda White, courtesy the art centre.



Key dates

23 December – 1 February Desart office closed.

11 – 13 April Desart Art Centre Conference – DoubleTree by Hilton, Alice Springs.

Email blasts for Desart members

Keep up to date with industry news, grants, art prizes and competition opportunities. Email programofficer@desart.com.au if you're missing out on our grant and competition email blasts.

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Desart wishes our membership and friends a safe and happy holiday. See you in the New Year!
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