

## **Divine Geometry Exhibition Essay**

The Sandover river runs through the heart-lands of the Alyawarr, its wide sandy bed and deep rooted river gums have long been a trading route and hunting grounds for the Alyawarr; like a snake, this dry river bed, winds it way across the land. The journey's of the Ancestors, their deeds and resting places also criss-cross this country, paths that are sacred, marking the land in a divine geometry of ancient stories and myths. Caterpillar, Possum, Bush Plum, Kangaroo and Emu, Dingo and Echidna each with its own story and sign; the mark of all life, sits upon a canvas of red earth, where all journeys are recorded.

Atheley is a small community, 350 Kilometres north east of Alice Springs. It lies alongside the red dirt track we call the Sandover highway; you could miss it if you were looking the other way. This is Lennie Jones Kngwarrey's country, along with his brother Freddy Jones Kngwarrey, these two brothers are the custodians for Caterpillar Dreaming, as their father before them, Jacob. An old Arrernte man, 'Wheelchair', continues the story for Caterpillar, as it enters Alice Springs and winds it's way along the Central McDonnell ranges, through Emily Gap, to it's final resting place in the Amoonguna sand-hills but it's story began in Atheley. Lennie and Freddy Jones were from a different era, more connected to their Fathers and country. The world-renowned artist Emily Kngwarrey is sister to them, as was Lily Sandover Kngwarrey. The artists of this tiny community of Atheley, in the heart of Alyawarr country, had a profound effect on the Aboriginal art movement. David Ross Apwerl was the custodian of many myths and dreamings, a senior lawman, alongside Lennie and Freddy Jones in the place most people know as Utopia.

When we look at Aboriginal art we are standing in the middle of an oral tradition where everything is interconnected and nothing is hidden. If we can understand the power of a silent language and the images that nurture it, then, perhaps it strikes at our own hearts and awakens something deep within us. What draws us behind the surface paint and textures are the very ancestors who created and populated all that surrounds us. Apmer, 'Country' is at the very core of existence. Modern society has constructed a world of concrete and steel to protect us from the natural world. Aboriginal art is created to bring us closer to the very earth beneath our feet. Kangaroo, Possum, Emu, Morning Star, Caterpillar, Bush Plum, Honey Ant, Kame, the poetry of names and the power of silence all contained within the boundaries of canvas and paint.

The dot has always been an important element in the creating of art and the Utopia artists perhaps pushed it way past the boundaries of any other art movement. A single dot could contain in its essence a thousand years of knowledge and on the surface, its application, controlled in a myriad of ways, reflecting the artist's viewpoint. The late Lily Sandover Kngwarrey would place a heavily loaded painting stick of white onto a black canvas and in one fluid motion push it away creating swirling patterns that stylized the grass which her painting represented. This grass was eaten by "Kangaroo rat" the small burrowing bettong, her totem, or dreaming as it sometimes called.

*Narayan Kozeluh 2016*