

CONTINUITY and INNOVATION in TIWI ART: from BEDE TUNGATALUM to PEDRO WONAEAMIRRI

The significance of Pedro Wonaeamirri's role in maintaining the continuity of Tiwi Art which values originality and individual innovation, is comparable to Bede Tungatalum's role two decades earlier.¹ Both artists have been leaders who came to prominence while very young, Bede Tungatalum was only nineteen when together with Giovanni Tipungwuti, he founded Tiwi Designs on Bathurst Island in 1971 under the eyes of senior artists Raphael and Declan Apuatimi. Similarly Pedro Wonaeamirri was seventeen in 1991 when he first exhibited with Jilamara and over the last decade and a half he has served as president and vice-president of Jilimara Arts; currently he is President of the association. Wonaeamirri's mentors at Jilamara include Kitty Kantilla, Paddy Freddy Puruntatameri and Freda Warlapinni. Tiwi Designs is based at Nguui, the unofficial capital of the Tiwi Islands, closest to Darwin and the center of the Catholic Mission; Jilamara was set up in the mid eighties and is based at Milikapiti, a smaller and more isolated community on Melville Island. The third art center, Munupi is also on Melville Island, at Pirlingimpi.

CONTACT HISTORY

The Tiwi Islands comprise Bathurst and Melville fitting together 'like two irregular paving stones', grouted by the narrow Apsley Strait, and were made by Murtankala, the Old Blind Woman during the Creation period, Palaneri.² Eighty kilometers away, is mainland Australia - Timbanbinibumi - for the Tiwi who regarded themselves as the people of the world, a place of darkness, of nobody and nothing. Tiwi uniqueness was reinforced by the treacherous seas surrounding them; nonetheless there is a rich contact history with Murantawi, the White Man beginning in 1644 with Abel Tasman, in 1705 the Dutch landed and Macassan trepangers came in their wake, in 1824 a British garrison was installed at Fort Dundas and later adventuring buffalo hunters and timber cutters preceded the establishment of Bathurst Island Mission by the Catholic church in 1911. Buffaloes, Christianity, metal axes and Australian Rules football were introduced and became thoroughly acculturated into Tiwi life. Anthropologists: Baldwin Spencer in 1911/12 and Charles Mountford in 1954; followed by collectors and artists: Russell Drysdale, Stuart Scoughall and Tony Tuckson in the fifties and Dorothy Bennett and Sandra (Le Brun) Holmes in the sixties, came and went.

PUKAMANI (Mortuary Rites)

Purukuparli had a wife, Waiji.³ His brother the moon man Tapara was a single man. He watched Waiji with her baby Jinani as she went out hunting. Tapara followed her and took her into the bush with him all day. She had left Jinani, Purukuparli's son, in the heat all day without food and he died of hunger. Then Purukuparli and Tapara began to fight with forked clubs and Purukuparli stabbed his brother in the eye. Tapara went into the sky and three days later he turned into the full moon. Purukuparli picked up Jinani's body and walked far into the sea and they both drowned. He left his wife behind in the bush and she turned into a curlew. You can still hear her today crying out in sadness for what she did.⁴

- Declan and Raphael Apuatimi

When he died, Purukuparli, Murtankala's son, said : 'Mauliantanili awangtini tangini mu mu / You must all follow me ; as I die, so must you all die' 5 Henceforth, the Tiwi became mortal and followed the instructions left by Purukuparli of how to do pukamani.

TOKAMPINI (the Birds)

Tokampini, the birds, variously depicted as jabis and pelicans are the messengers, who told Purukuparli about his wife's adultery. 'The birds listened and they responded - "If you are having ceremony we will give you feathers for your headband, armbands and goose featherball to decorate yourself so you won't be recognized by the spirit of the dead"'6 Tokampini along with representations of Purukuparli, Waiji, Tapara and Jinani are recurrent subjects of Tiwi figurative carving. *Bird*, 1989 by Ambrose Munkara is a classic example of Tokampini.

TUTINI (the poles)

"It (the pole) was slowly and laboriously cut with an iron tomahawk, but formerly with a sharp shell, until it has the form decided upon by its artificer" 7 - Baldwin Spencer

The most prominent feature of pukamani are the tutini; the large poles of ironwood, carved and painted with ochre that mark the burial site. They are set into the ground to represent the human body and stand for the deceased. Tunga or ochred bark baskets made from folding over a sheet of bark and stitching the sides with bush strings are traditionally used to carry food and gifts for the deceased's family and subsequently placed upended on top of the tutini, making a sort of hat for the head of the pole. The tutini are left in the ground to weather and return to the earth after the pukamani is completed. In 1958 Tony Tuckson commissioned, through Stuart Scoughall a set of seventeen pukamani poles from the artists at Milikapiti for the Art Gallery of New South Wales which constituted the gallery's first acquisition of Aboriginal art . Subsequently tutini were expressly made and marketed as sculptural objects. *Pukamani(Burial Pole)*, 1988 by J.P.Kelantumana shows some of the features noted by Mountford; a window in the middle and outstretched arms at the top. According to Paddy Henry a post with 'projecting arms was a man' 8

KULAMA (increase and initiation ceremony)

'The Men dug a small circle, the oven, tumarapi, (navel) in which the yams were to be cooked. Then sitting down the men pushed the sand and grass outwards with their feet until the milimika (ceremonial ground) about fifteen feet in diameter, was cleared '. 9 - Charles Mountford

The Kulama Ceremony is an annual increase ceremony that enacts how to prepare Cheeky Yam (*Dioscorea sativa*, variety *rotunda*), a staple foodstuff which requires special treatment to render it non poisonous and safe to eat.10 As the nodal event in the calendar, kulama celebrates abundance and signals other events- the initiation of young boys, the naming of babies; it is regarded as essential for the continuity of life and takes place at the end of the Wet Season, when the moon has a golden ring around it; then it is

said that the Moon Man, Tapara is doing kulama. The motif of concentric circles in Tiwi Art derives from kulama and represents the ceremonial dance ground, radiating from a navel - the oven where the yams are cooked.

OCHRES (Turtiyanginari)

The ochres are being left by our ancestors, so still following their footsteps. Ochres were here used by our elders and today we are still using it. We have never forgotten our colour. Same colour as bark painting, pukamani poles, bark baskets as well as ceremonial ornaments, armbands, spears, sticks and all that. Also decoration of body when attending funeral, kulama and pukamani ceremonies.¹¹
- Pedro Wonaeamirri

Tiwi artists overwhelmingly use hand ground locally found ochres in their paintings on bark, paper, and canvas, however some Tiwi printmakers on fabric and paper use the full range of colours available to contemporary artists. The Jilamara artists when creating prints usually replicate the ochre palette, or use black. The local ochres are Red- Yaringa; Black - Tuniwini/ Tuniwinni , Yellow- Arikuningah / Arigeninga and White -Tutiyangini / Tuteiguni. Both the yellow and the white are found at Tarracumbie Falls near Milikapiti, and at other places on Melville Island. The yellow is much prized for its strength of colour and intensity. The black is crushed charcoal and the red is made by baking the yellow ochre in a fire until it changes colour. Red ochre is accorded the name for a clan group, Jarringapila. These friable ochres are fixed now with pva glue, where previously either the white of turtles' eggs, wild honey and beeswax or the 'particularly gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids' was used as the binder.¹²

PWOJA and MINGA (body decoration)

Pwoja, body painting and minga, scarification provide the repertoire of lines, mulypinyini, dots, pwanga and circles, kurluwukari - which make up the design, jilamara found in Tiwi art . 'Some of them had marks on their bodies, apparently cut or carved which were looked upon by them as a kind of ornament '¹³ Ritual scarring is no longer practiced, and some pwoja actually mimic minga, the distinctive chevrons of parallel cuts on the chest and arms; today the word minga is often used to refer to body decoration in general. The scarification variously symbolized barbed spear heads, the fronds of the Zamia palm and the cycad, crocodile skin and woven bangles.¹⁴ Amongst the Mountford barks there is one of the chevron body marks and Freda Warlapinni and her son Linus in particular employ these chevrons as a distinctive feature of their paintings both on bark, canvas and paper. While other artists have utilized the incising as sgraffitto employed as a decorative feature on tungas and tutini , to great effect in their painting in two dimensions. The thickness of ochre yields like skin and lends itself to marks within the colour field.

BEDE TUNGATALUM

Bede Tungatalum's *Kurlama*, 1987 is typical of his mixed media paintings of the period, it incorporates three screen print designs printed in black and coloured in with ochres set in a ground of jilamara designs painted in ochre. The half print, *Kurlama Circle* creates a cupola at the top illuminating a sacred space enclosed by a colonnade of the second screen print - *Pukamani Poles* and overlaid in the foreground, three repeat place prints of a painted up dancer stand on a painted ground dancing around the kulama fire(oven) ;

performing the ceremony mirrored in the cupola. Representation of the human form is a relatively recent innovation in Tiwi Art. Mountford was told that the first human headed burial post was carved in the 1930s by Kado/ Kardo Kerinua.¹⁵ So self portraits in any form are an exception. However Bede Tungatalum is the exception. He has depicted himself in two distinct modes painted up for ceremony as a dancer, as above, or as an artist making his work. His print, *Self Portrait- Owl Man*, 1988 encodes his own face as Tiwi Man. Done up in paint and feathers and false beard, he presents himself as a two dimensional patterned mask against a patterned field. The vast black field of his torso anchors the head and plants the body implied as a block of wood, recalling the tutini. The Owl Man, Purukikini is the ancestor who created the kulama and the boy initiates all have white ochred faces in honour of him, the white vertical stripes on Tungatalum's Owl Man recall the white stripes painted down the boys' arms. Mountford's records of facial decorations show Tungatalum's Owl Man is an amalgam of designs for the Boobook Owl, Purutjkini, distinguished by the white vertical stripes which refer to feather patterns and The Barn Owl, Pintoma who wears a false beard, baludi and a head dress of cockatoo feather, primitiki.¹⁶ In the 3rd NATSIAA, a work by Tungatalum incorporating painting and screenprinting won the Award in mixed media. It shows the artist engaged as if painting or sculpting the pukamani poles, which invites the reading that the artist is Tungatalum. Just as Tungatalum as Owl Man is The Tiwi Man, he is also The Artist. In 1984, Earthworks artist / printer and Art Advisor at Tiwi Designs, Ray Young created the poster for the 1st Aboriginal Art Award (NATSIAA) using a photograph of Bede Tungatalum painting, so its not surprising that Tungatalum subsequently pictured himself in this way, correspondingly Young in choosing this subject chose an artist who could embody the idea of Aboriginal Art at that time.¹⁷

MARIA JOSETTE ORSTO

'My designs are growing stronger. I am always building up a new design in my head-sometimes I combine Old Tiwi designs with my new ones ' 18 - Maria Josette Orsto

In 1974, Maria Josette Orsto, while still a teenager became the first female artist to design for Tiwi Design. The daughter of Declan and Jean Baptiste Apuatimi, Maria Josette grew up in her father's country Imalu on Melville Island, where he taught her to paint, in his later years she was his assistant. There has never been any prohibition on women's full participation in ceremonial life and art making. After Declan's death she accompanied Jean Baptiste back to her mother's country, Wangurruwu (Marluwu) on Bathhurst Island. A prolific artist - a printmaker, carver and painter - Maria Josette held her first solo exhibition at the age of eighteen in 1990. Her usual subject is pamigini, armbands and body painting related to the Kulama ceremony; her first design for Tiwi Design was called *Kulama*. However she is a March Fly woman and in an early work produced with Munupi, in the first glorious phase of Tiwi printmaking under the direction of Annie Franklin, Maria Josette made a startling lithograph, *Japaunga/ Japijapini (Cheeky Fly) March Fly Dreaming* 1991, as if the fat impudent fly has just landed on the dotted field.

When Josette paints she begins with a dark coloured ground. Using a thick brush she paints the main shapes- circles and lines. Then she mixes up a variety of colours and using a small brush fills the shapes with seemingly endless combinations of coloured lines, rows of dots, dotted grounds and cross hatching.¹⁹
- Marie Mc Mahon

Kulama Body Painting, 2002 confirms to this model, its organization is a central highly elaborated roundel, representing the dance ground comprising four concentric circles from which lines radiate dividing the space into quadrants, at the midway point along each a small red ochre circle is placed creating an orbiting pathway. In each quadrant, large double circles smaller than the central one and less elaborated are centrally positioned and from each circle lines further divide the space into geometric segments infilled with dotting or crossing hatching, each version a variation on another. Within the area marked by the four solid red ochre circles there are four small double circles, representing the pamijini armbands which radiate divisions in eight small sections, variously dotted. The painting appears at first glance symmetrical but on close looking there is no mirroring, rather a dynamic balance of elements which give it a surprising vitality and movement; it almost spins on its axis propelled by the blades of small double circles, but is anchored by the solid red ochre circles.

JEAN BAPTISTE APUATIMI

I love my painting I love doing it. My husband Declan Apuatimi taught me to paint. The designs are ones he taught me. He said "one day you will be an artist - you will take my place" Now I am doing that . Painting makes me alive.²⁰ - Jean Baptiste Apuatimi

'Jirtaka (Swordfish) is lovely tucker, my husband used to catch that fish and bring it home. After we had eaten that fish we would gather the bones and paint them. First we would black them and then jilamara (paint a good design). The first painting I did was on the fish bone and my husband taught me'.²¹ The fish bone referred to is the saw toothed blade protuberance which gives the swordfish/sawfish its name in English. Tiwi people paint on them as well as fish skulls and more commonly, on shells, using the repertoire of jilamara designs to decorate objects which have no ceremonial significance. In *Jirtaka*, 2002 Jean Baptiste creates an all-over pattern of contrasting triangles from three serrated barbs, which recalls an actual decorated 'saw shark nose' painted by Declan between 1980 and his death in 1984.²² Amongst the Mountford barks, there is one of 'a saw-fish, jidati' represented with legs rather than fins.²³ Jean Baptiste is still likely to begin a painting with a black ground, and as well as other sea life subjects she draws on pukamani - with images of tutinis, tungas and pamajini set on a field of jilamara. *Pamijini*, 1993 depicts the woven armbands decorated with red abrus seeds and finished with feathered tassles called pamijini worn by the dancers in the pukamani . Jean Baptiste's pamajini have a characteristic android quality with the feathered tassles resembling the creatures feet and the squared off circle serving as its body and head. In this painting she typically has divided the picture plane into three unequal rectangles while nonetheless preserving a sense of symmetry and a deep geometrically balanced order. The predominant white outline is also feature of her work and a legacy of her husband's style, and comparable to his bark painting of pamajini. ²⁴

KITTY KANTILLA (Kutuwalumi Purawarrumpatu)

I started doing carvings at Paru opposite Bathurst Island Mission after the war and sold artifacts to Dorothy Bennett and Sandra Holmes. ²⁵ I paint like my father. The jilamara that I do it's my father's design. I watched him as a young girl and I still got the design in my head...I will paint until the day I die. ²⁶ - Kitty Kantilla

Kitty Kantilla had been making art for forty years before her first exhibition a group show with other Paru women in 1988 of carvings and some paintings on bark. By then she had moved to Milikapiti where she continued painting with the recently established, Jilamara Arts alongside her friend, Freda Warlapinni, working on the padded surface of old fabric printing table in the art shed. Her work is notable for its rectangular blocks or bands of solid colour often placed in the center, or just slightly off center as if to suggest the source of the design or as vertical or horizontal girders that hold the delicate scratchy jilamara in place. Kantilla's art is never representational and even her figure carvings are relentlessly covered in geometric patterns and resemble scaled down tutinis. 27 Her painting, *Parlini Jilamara (Old Design)*, 1993 is typical of the first phase of her work, laid on a black background with horizontal bands of dots bisected by a wide band of dots. Kantilla's predilection for dots, applied with a coconut stick earned her the nickname "dot dot". The same essential form is discernible in her sugar lift etching, *Traditional Tiwi Motif XVI*, 1997 made with Franck Gohier for Redhand Prints. Gohier also worked with her on her last print, a three colour silk screenprint, *Pumpini Jilimara*, in which she came closest to making a print that looked like her painting. *Jilimara/ Good Design #1, #2*, 2001 are part of a series of lithographs, *Arukulunga Wunitaka Thelma*, *Big Wind Thelma* with Martin King for the Australian Print Workshop, produced by Kantilla, Jean Baptiste Apuatimi. Maryanne Mungaptopi, Janice Murray and Freda Warlapinni during and after tropical cyclone Thelma which battered the Tiwi Islands in 2001. The artists took shelter in the Jilamara office, and afterwards resumed the workshop.

There is a strong affinity between Kantilla's work and Pedro Wonaeamirri's and he acknowledges her as his most significant influence as a painter. Judith Ryan has noted a significant change in the later phase of Kantilla's painting when she abandoned the black ground as the base for the jilamara and around 1997 began using a white ground "which ushered in dynamic changes in her painting" 28 Up till then the black ground which represented the black skin of the body was conventional in Tiwi art; when painting tutini, the poles are often first blacked in a fire to achieve the black ground. Kantilla's innovation was taken up by other artists in particular her niece Dymphna Kerinauia and became part of Wonaeamirri's repertoire as well.

PEDRO WONAEAMIRRI (Gurrumaiyuwa)

When I paint I think of myself and who I am. Sometimes when I paint I sing to myself too . The songs help me to find a way of getting my own designs ...The paintings are my body design. Tiwi people know my design -they say 'that is Pedro' ...I think it is important for a young person my age to know the old customs and the traditional Tiwi ways so I can teach the younger ones what our grandfathers left behind. 29 - Pedro Wonaeamirri

The art of Pedro Wonaeamirri is inseparable from the man he is; a passionate young man with fresh ideas coupled with a palpable seriousness and integrity who is governed by his respect for his elders and the past - he is one of the few young Tiwi who speaks Old Tiwi. Gallerist, Beverly Knight has known him since he was a teenager - 'There was always an aura about him, you could see he had the respect of the old people'.³⁰ Wonaeamirri's work is distinctive for his use of wooden combs, *kayimwagakima*, carved from ironwood and bloodwood, to make repeat patterns which he took up in 1994, since then other Jilamara artists have begun using the comb, in particular Raelene Kerinauia. The revival of old designs began at Jilamara in 1990 when James Bennett encouraged artists to look

at photocopies of Mountford's photographs of the Tiwi paintings he collected at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) in 1954 and it flowered in ochre paintings on paper and fabric designs in bright fibre reactive dyes. In 2000 while in Adelaide working with the Australian Print Workshop, on his first etchings, Wonaeamirri was able to see and study first hand the Mountford Tiwi bark Collection at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

This suite of four works, each titled *Pwoja* is based on pukamani body paint designs and comprise two works on paper painted in 2003 and two on linen painted in 2003 and 2005 done with the carved wooden comb and a fine brush. The works from 2003 painted on a white ground utilize the same patterns: finely dotted open diamonds, tracks of dots both made with the comb, punctuated by slim bands of solid colour, often finely vertically barred with a contrasting colour. The 2005 painting is almost a composite of the three earlier works reworking and elaborating elements and patterns from them. Wonaeamirri's unique style has a dynamic geometry where his parallel lines cross the canvas slightly on the diagonal creating unexpected triangular sections, slim wedges along the edge of the painting as if the design continues beyond the paintings surface, and in other works he divides the painting in half and sets two fields of parallel lines of different colour fields abutting each other but never joining making a rift between the two areas, or sets horizontal tracks of lines infilled with geometric patterns at right angles to each other but with each field of tracks slightly off center so the picture plane is faceted and perspective broken, creating different vanishing points. Like the *tunga*, which are always painted on a single sheet of bark folded in half with a different design on each side, some of Wonaeamirri's paintings could also almost be folded over. Carving pukamani poles is where Wonaeamirri began making art and his *Tutini* are notable for the contrast between the austerity of the geometric painted designs, and the roundness and moulded quality of the solid colour sections which Beverly Knight describes as having " a voluptuousness, an unusual fullness in the body curves ".³¹ The decorated sections relate to each other as a three dimensional painting with equal weight given to the punctuating bands of single colours. While Wonaeamirri rarely includes a representational element, the body is fully invoked and felt in his *tutini* but camouflaged as it should be. In 1999 Pedro Wonaeamirri was commissioned by the AGNSW to make six poles to complement the original set commissioned by Tuckson. Today, *tutini* are still an integral part of Tiwi funerals and memorials.³² Pedro Wonaeamirri is making *tutini* for Kitty Kantilla's Pukamani to be held later this year.³³

SUZANNE SPUNNER

ENDNOTES

1. The first record of paintings on bark in the North Australian region are from Melville Island in 1834 by Major Campbell -" one in particular being neatly and regularly done all over, resembling the cross bars of a cell" cited by Groger-Wurm, Helen.M, *Australian Aboriginal Bark Paintings and their mythological interpretation Vol.1. Eastern Arnhem Land*, .Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1973
2. 'like two irregular paving stones', Simpson, Colin, *Adam in Ochre: Inside Aboriginal Australia*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1951
3. In some versions of the story, Purukuparli's wife's name is Bima/ Pima , a more general word referring to a woman and Waiji is reserved for her later incarnation as the curlew renowned for its distressingly human sounding call.

4. as told to Margie West at Nguiu in 1984. West, Margaret K.C, *Declan: A Tiwi Artist*, (exhibition catalogue) Australian City Properties Limited, Perth, 1987
5. Mountford, Charles P, *The Tiwi: their Art, Myth and Ceremony*, Phoenix House, London, 1958, p.30
6. Farmer, Brian in *Living Tiwi: Tiwi Awuta Yimpanguwi/ Contemporary Tiwi Paintings from Milikapiti, Melville Island*, compiled by Marielle Schwerin, Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association, Milikapiti, 2004
7. Spencer, Baldwin cited in Mountford op cit
8. Hoff, J.A. Fieldnotes, 1986, p.11 cited in Hoff, op cit
9. Mountford, ibid, p.134
10. Cheeky as an inscription in Aboriginal English signifies the plant or animal is dangerous, bites, stings or could be poisonous- it means watch out for this one he might hurt you.
11. Wonaeamirri, Pedro in *Living Tiwi*, op cit
12. Ryan, Judith, *Art of the Tiwi: from the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria*, (exhibition catalogue), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1994; Mountford, op cit. p 110
13. Major, R.H, *Early Voyages to Terra Australis*, London, 1859 cited in Hoff, Jennifer, *Tiwi Graveposts*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1988
14. Barnes, Kathy, *Kiripapurajuwi (Skills of our hands), Good Craftsmen and Tiwi Art*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission, Darwin, 1999; Hoff, ibid
15. West, op cit
16. Mountford, op cit, p 93/4
17. NATSIAA - acronym for National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award - known colloquially as the Telstra and now in its twenty third year officially named the Telstra Award. The annual major event on the calendar of Aboriginal art, held in Darwin at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.
18. Orsto, Maria Josette, tiwiart.com, April, 2006
19. Mc Mahon, Marie, *Munupi Dreaming* (exhibition catalogue), Melville Island, 1990
20. Apuatimi, Jean Baptiste, *Mirripaka (salt water)*, (exhibition catalogue), Raft Artspace, Darwin, 2005
21. Apuatimi, Jean Baptiste, tiwiart.com, April, 2003, cited in Accession Notes, QAG, 2003
22. West, op cit, cat 59

23. Mountford, op cit, p.166

24. West, op cit, cat 32

25. Paru on Melville Island beside the Apsley Strait was Joe Cooper's old camp. He was a buffalo shooter, and the first whiteman to live permanently on Melville Island who lived at Paru from 1905 until 1918. Paru was later occupied by a vigorous group of older women as a widows camp, they became known as the Paru mob.
26. Ryan, Judith, *The Magic of Ceremony translated into great art*, Obituary for Kitty Kantilla, *The Age*, 8/10/2003; tiwiart.com, 2005
27. Notwithstanding one painting which was described by Kantilla as being of a frying pan with an egg cooking in it - a prime instance of an artist pressed to come up with meaning!
28. Ryan, Judith, op cit

29. Wonaeamirri, Pedro, *Living Tiwi* op cit; Tiwiart.com 2006; (catalogue) Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, 2005
30. Knight, Beverly interview by author, Alcaston Gallery, Fitzroy, April 24, 2006
31. Knight, Beverly, *ibid.*
32. To commemorate the Dutch landing three hundred years ago at Karslake on Melville Island, a set of tutini were made by Jilimara artists and installed last year.
33. Interviews by author with Pedro Wonaeamirri and Glen Farmer at Jilamara Arts and Craft, Milikapiti, Melville Island, May 5, 2006.

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Tipungwuti, Conrad and Anderson, Stephen - *Tiwi Design*.

Interviews by the author:

Beverly Knight at Alcaston Gallery, Fitzroy, April 24, 2006

Pedro Woneaemirri, Glen Farmer, John Martin Tipungwuti and Dyphna Keriniua at Jilimara , Milikapiti, Melville island, May 5, 2006

NOTE:

The late, great Tiwi artist Kitty Kantilla's work most commonly featured a centrally placed rectangle of solid colour often joined by a smaller rectangle in which sometimes she placed small circles of other colours. Like much of Tiwi art there is no story rather the design references a particular ceremony, the Kurlama. However for some time until it was corrected in later descriptions, a particular Kantilla painting was described as a of a frying pan with eggs cooking in it, because when it was first acquired somebody said that was what it looked like and Kantilla assented. Yes, it did look like that, but obviously Kantilla knew it was not that and knew it so authentically it did not need to be said. Kantilla's Kulama painting had become a frying pan! A slippage had occurred between representation and symbol, between the artist's reality and the collector's desire to assimilate the unfamiliar into the familiar, and to get a story, any story.