



REGGIE ULURU

Melbourne Art Fair 2024, Booth M4 22 - 25 Feb 2024
cbOne Gallery 23 Feb - 09 Mar 2024



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REGGIE ULURU

WATI NGINTAKA PERENTIE LIZARD MAN

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Photographs by Andrew Curtis

Chapman & Bailey, in collaboration with Walkatjara Art Uluru, is proud to present REGGIE ULURU.

REGGIE ULURU paints the Ngintaka Story and how he hid a magic grindstone in the curl of his tail, travelling along the songline of his country. As he paints, Reggie often sings 'inma' songs from the story. Inma is the particular dance associated with a story and is a strong traditional tool to keep culture strong, connecting the dancer and singer with their ancestors. Some of these inma songs are allowed to be sung in public, other kept strictly for private ceremony.

"I paint Ngintaka - the Perentie, that one, that Perentie. That's our Dreaming story. And Tinka - the Goanna, those one's are important. In the old days they used to hunt and eat them. At one time it was a favourite food. All those animals were hunted - rabbits, mala (Rufous Hare wallaby) - hunted at night.

That Perentie story arrived here (Uluru). He rested here for a moment, then travelled on to return somewhere else out west, somewhere in Western Australia. He left this place to return to his own country and another group were running after him to another country.

He was running and as (as they chased him) they were wondering "Hey, where is he going?" They were seeing what he was discarding (as he travelled). There were the remains of animals everywhere, many blue-tongue lizards, those kinds of creatures. Their remains were scattered across the bush as evidence of his insatiable gluttony feasting on those creatures.

That's the way he was living for a long time during those old days. He had no awareness of his actions at all, he was just a glutton for meat.

I'm from around Indulkana. That's where I was born and where I spent my early childhood being carried around country. And then I began to walk for myself. I didn't go to school.

I remained in the bush and had grown up by the time we came to Uluru. Our father brought us here. He told us, "Let's find a place and settle down. We'll show you my country", he said. And we thought, "Wow, OK.."

They were good times, the way we lived. People were peaceful then and didn't judge others. But all of those old people have passed now and only two of us are left."

— REGGIE ULURU, Courtesy of Walkatjara Art Uluru 2023

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“Ngayuku uncle-ngku, Reggie Uluru exhibition-iku palunya katingi exhibition-ikutu, ka paluru kulini, ‘muntauwa, nganana, ngayulu tjinguru exhibition-ngka nyangatja.

Tjukurpa nyara palunya ngayuku tjunama, ngayuku wangka, nyakula nintiringkunyjtaku, read-amilara, kulira. Tjukurpa irititja. Wirunya ka malatja malatjangku tjinguru kulinma, ‘muntauwa, alatjitu nyangatja.’ Kawaliripaingka.

Mala tjinguru putu kulini ngula palu Tjukurpa kanyintjaku.”

“My uncle, Reggie is having an exhibition, and he is being taken to see it. He will get to realise, ‘This is us; this is me, in this exhibition here.’ He will say, ‘Keep this story of mine and what I say about it so people can see and read; understand and know it. This is ancient law and culture.

It is special and the generations to come will always know, ‘of course, this is the way it is.’

We are making sure it is never lost or forgotten.

In the future people might go astray but they will still have the Tjukurpa.”

— SAMMY ULURU WILSON, Mutitjulu Community, 2023
Courtesy of Walkatjara Art Uluru, 2023

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Red rocks, red sand, the breathtaking honey gold of spinifex; green, brown and charcoal black mulga; purple, pink and white wildflowers; dark grey-green desert oaks, under a sky more blue than most people, anywhere else, have ever seen.

The country around Uluru is startling – not just the rock and the timeless landscape, not just the light and the breathtaking distance. It's the colour, that photos can never do justice to, that the eye can barely understand. The hues change with every season, with the amount of light, as the sun wheels across the sky, as clouds blow over and away, each change remaking the vista anew so that every visit, every day, every minute you might be somewhere you didn't expect, you might see something you have never seen before.

But it's the spirit of place, that undeniable but intangible thing that makes us go back that steals our souls.

You have to go there to truly understand, you have to see that place, walk the Country, walk around the rock, watch the light change, see the open distances. The closest you will get to seeing that place for real is not a photo or a video, it's art, because proper art done proper way can show not just what a place looks like but what it is, not catching the visuals of a place but capturing the essence. Art by a traditional owner, who can capture the soul of Country, who can tell you the ancient stories and songlines of that place, doesn't just show you that place, it in a real way takes you there.

Reggie Uluru is traditional owner of Uluru, painting his Country, telling the stories of that place named Uluru, like the artist, for time longer than time - but was known for a short while as Ayers Rock. He lives at Mutitjulu Community in Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. The national park belongs to Anangu but is leased to the government in a deal made as part of the native title settlement.

Reggie paints his dreaming the timeless Wati Ngintaka, (Perentie Lizard Man) story in the colours of his Country, combining figurative forms of a perentie from that place, reminiscent of ancient cave paintings, with contemporary western desert dot painting styles. The colours might seem gaudy to people who have never been to that place, who have never been overwhelmed by it.

The Ngintaka, styled a bit like a rock painting, is almost camouflaged, dotted like the background. The now-time Perentie, in the wild, is almost invisible, good at hiding, you can go to that sacred land again and again and never see one.

The story Reggie shows us is ancient, a creation story of a dreamtime being who helped make the land the place it is. He is painting culture, what whitefella call the dreaming. Our dreaming ancestors are our family, they are part of our identity,

they connect us to our Country. Reggie was handed down this story, this eternal dreaming, from his father and grandfather, this is family story, this dreaming is family.

A perentie, if you have never been told, is a great big desert monitor lizard, the biggest lizard on the continent now called Australia and one of the top five biggest in the world. To picture one think of a lace monitor blown up to two and a half metres long. They are the apex predator in the desert, nothing can kill a perentie, nothing will try and eat an adult perentie, but a human or another perentie.

The Wati Ngintaka story has been passed down for hundreds of generations, from elder to child, from mouth to ear, and is one of the oldest living stories on Earth. It tells of the Perentie Man's travels across the continent after he stole a grinding stone. It's important Tjukurpa, the Anangu word for story/law. The signs of the story, and of the Wati Ngintaka can be seen across the desert and can be read by those who know the way. As in many classic Tjukurpa stories and songlines there are important life lessons in it.

Songlines is a much misunderstood concept for whitefella. They are the stories of dreaming ancestors, of dreamtime beings as they crossed the lands, leaving evidence of their passing. Each traditional owner owns part of the story, the part that happens on their Country. Songlines are also maps, if you know the songline it will lead you across Country from site to site, from waterhole to waterhole this is an important survival skill in the driest parts of the driest inhabited continent.

Painting this story gives others a chance of understanding it. It keeps culture alive by telling these important stories.

So this art is not just colourful and beautiful, it's not just storied and powerful, it's not just a lovely thing to hang on a wall, although it is that. It's a symbol of survival, it's a tool for those Indigenous people keeping culture alive. It's an encyclopedia, it is power, it's Country, and Family and Story. Reggie's art, like much of the art produced by Indigenous people, is priceless, not just as an object d'art but also as a cultural artefact, as a memory of culture. A record in firm form of a culture still very much alive since colonisation.

We continue to use art to keep culture alive.

— CLAIRE G COLEMAN



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-260

Acrylic on linen

198 x 199 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-805

Acrylic on linen

91 x 91 cm

\$15,000



REGGIE ULURU

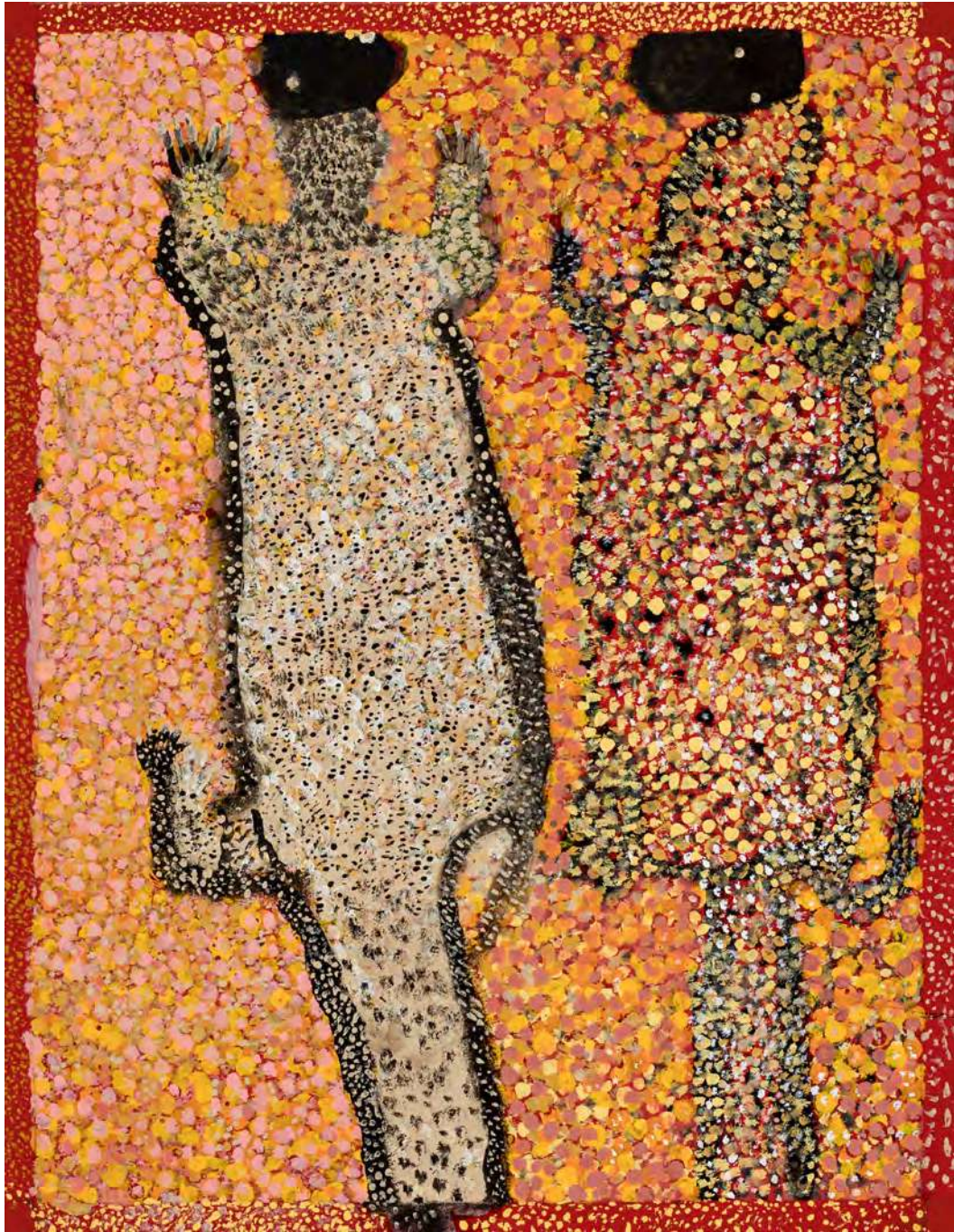
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-150

Acrylic on linen

91 x 136 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-609

Acrylic on linen

107 × 87 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

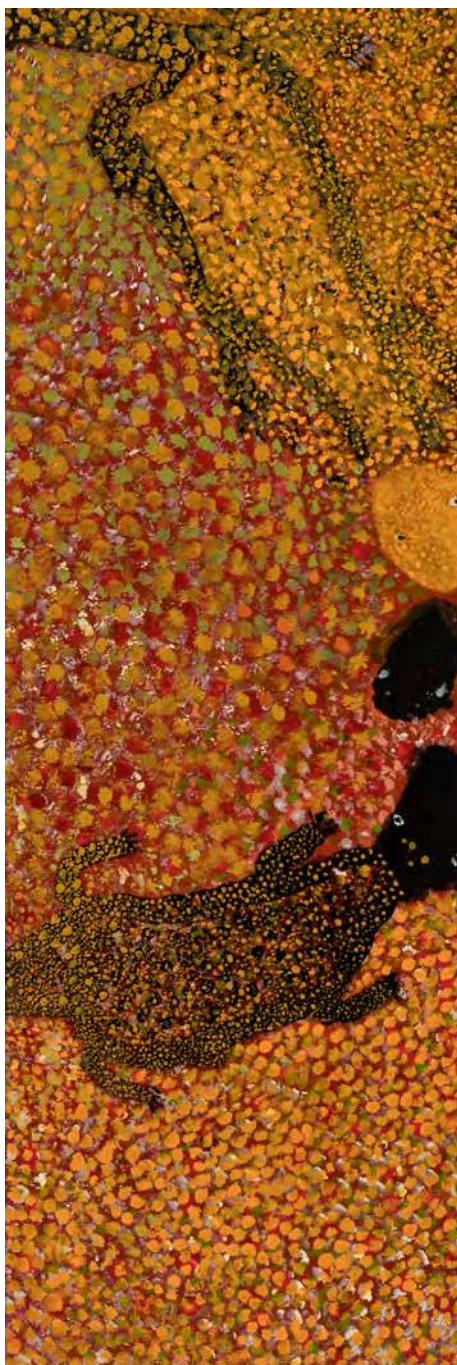
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-153

Acrylic on linen

107 x 92 cm

\$16,000



REGGIE ULURU

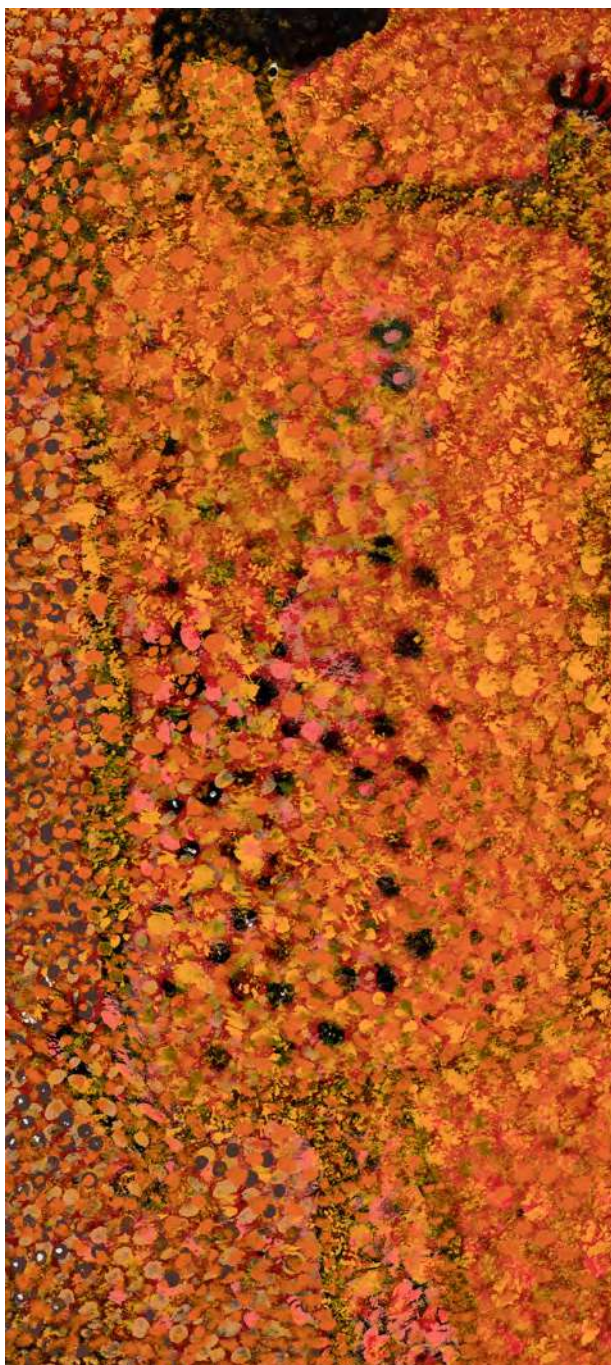
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-157

Acrylic on linen

136 x 46 cm

\$16,000



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-158

Acrylic on linen

101 x 46 cm

\$12,000



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-931

Acrylic on linen

106 x 66 cm

\$16,000



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-1093

Acrylic on linen

66 x 66 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-930

Acrylic on linen

61 x 61 cm

\$7,500



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-146

Acrylic on linen

61 x 61 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

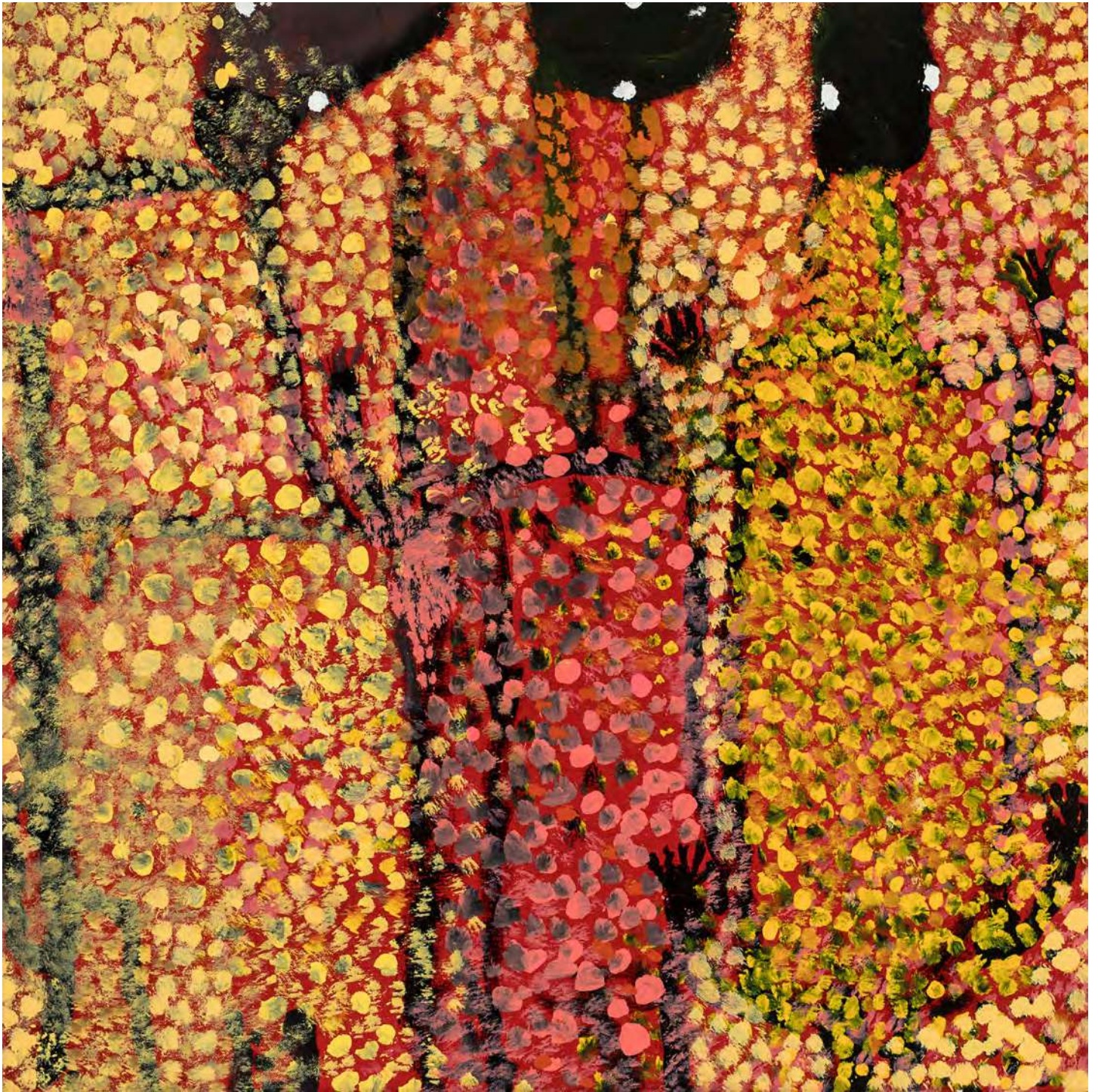
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-946

Acrylic on linen

61 x 61 cm

\$7,500



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-148

Acrylic on linen

61 x 61 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-929

Acrylic on linen

56 x 41 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-144

Acrylic on linen

56 x 41 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2023

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 23-147

Acrylic on linen

55 x 41 cm

\$4,250



REGGIE ULURU

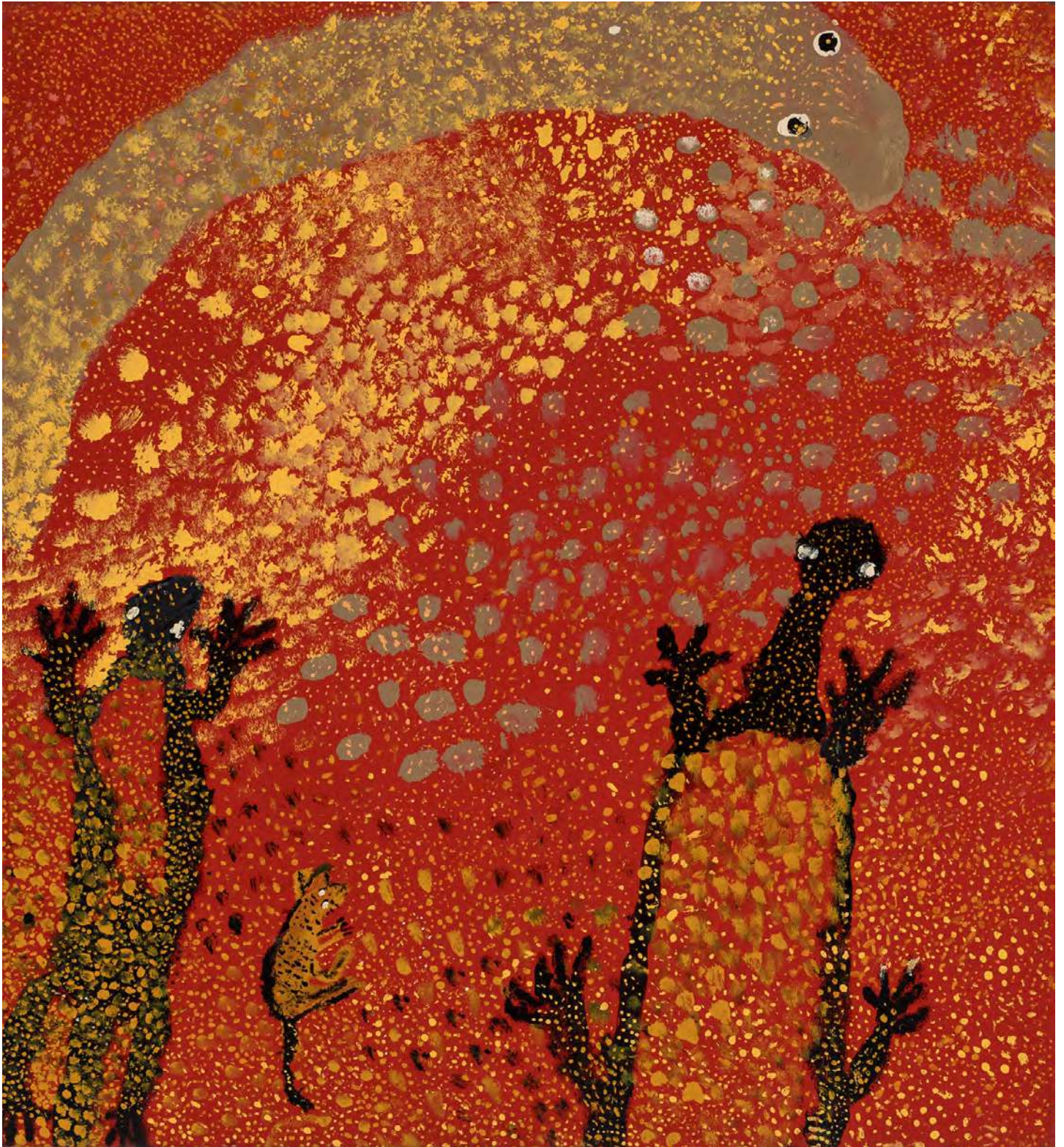
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2024

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 24-121

Acrylic on linen

41 x 56 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

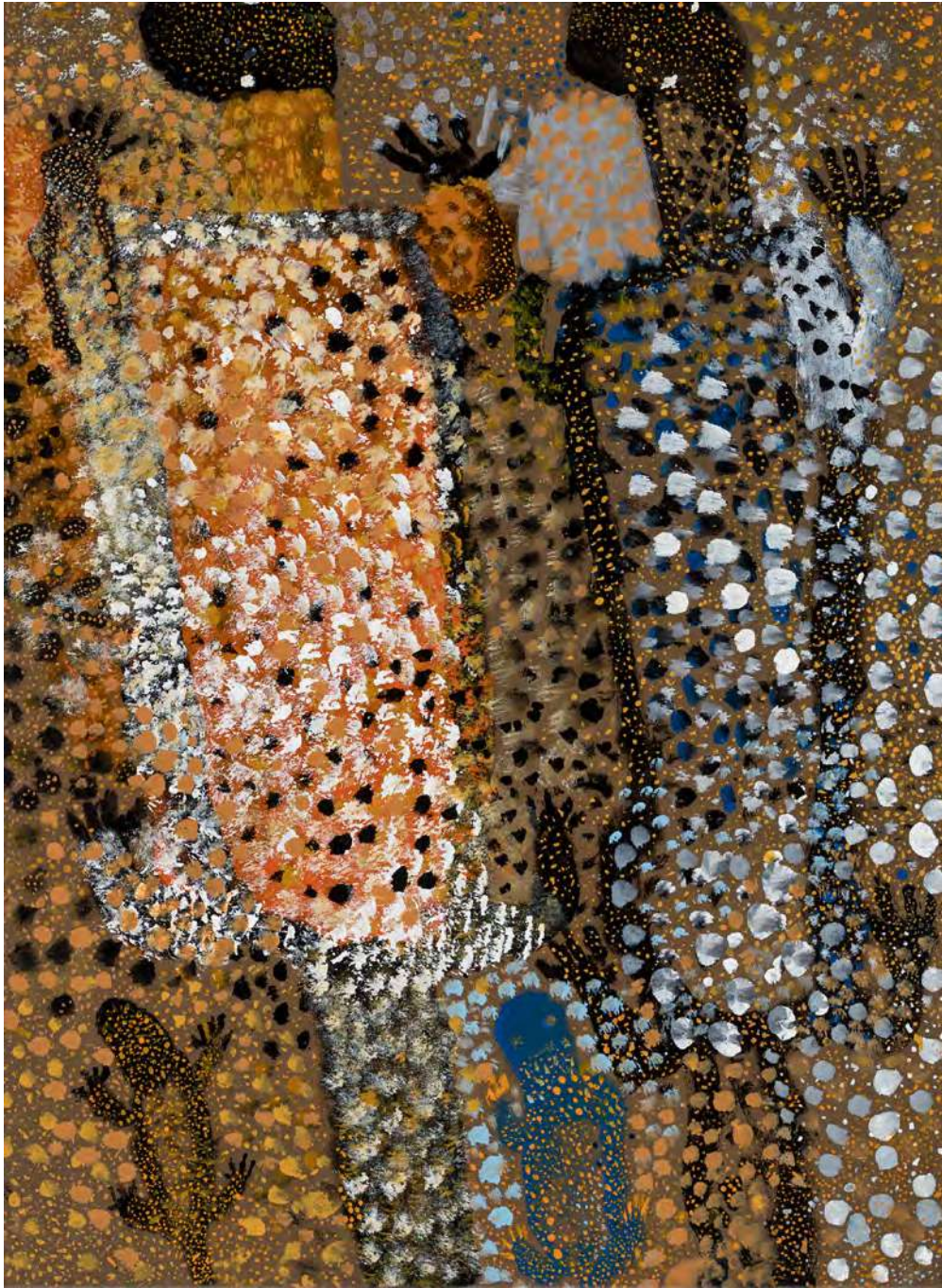
Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man & Kuniya Python Woman, 2024

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 24-122

Acrylic on linen

66 x 61 cm

SOLD



REGGIE ULURU

Wati Ngintaka Perentie Lizard Man, 2024

Walkatjara Art Uluru cat no 24-123

Acrylic on linen

76 × 56 cm

SOLD

REGGIE ULURU - CV

Courtesy of Walkatjara Art Uluru

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Griffith University, Brisbane, Qld
KWM Contemporary
First Nations Art Award Finalists Exhibition
- 2023 Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, Qld
Miles Allen and Maruku Arts
Tjukurpa Putitja / Bush Stories
- 2022 Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Desert Mob Exhibition
- 2021 fortyfivedownstairs, Melbourne, VIC
KWM Contemporary
First Nations Art Award Finalists Exhibition
- 2021 Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Desert Mob Exhibition
- 2021 Monte Sant Angelo Mercy College, Sydney, NSW
Annual NAIDOC Exhibition
- 2020 Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Desert Mob Exhibition
- 2020 Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin NT
Punu-Living Wood, Salon Arts Projects
- 2019 Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Desert Mob Exhibition
- 2017 Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Desert Mob Exhibition

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2021 *Return to Uluru*, Mark McKenna, Black Inc.
- 2021 *Reggie Uluru*, Desart, ICTVPlay
- 2019 *I am Uluru*, Jen Cowley and the Uluru Family
- 2015 *Uluru Rises*, David Taggart, Maptia
- 2015 *Uluru Handback 20 Years On*, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Youtube
- 2012 *In Freds Footsteps: 20 Years of Restoring Sight*, Marge Overs, Fred Hollows Foundation, Sydney, NSW
- 1992 *Desert Crafts*, J Isaacs, Doubleday, Sydney

AWARDS

2020 People's Choice Award, King & Wood Ma.