

# YIWARRA KUJU THE CANNING STOCK ROUTE

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Education  
at the  
**NATIONAL  
MUSEUM OF  
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## Natawalu 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

Before you tell students the story of the painting ask them these questions:

- What do you think this painting is about?
- What sort of emotion do you feel when looking at this painting?
- How do you think the artist feels about this place?

Now tell students the story of the incident at Natawalu and ask the following questions:

- Do you view the painting differently now?
- What does this painting tell you about what Mayapu feels is important about the story?
- Do you think Alfred Canning would paint the story differently?



**Mayapu Elsie Thomas**  
born about 1934  
Wangkajunga language group,  
Wangkatjungka community

*We used to walk until we came to the Canning Stock Road. At the stock road we speared bullocks. That was where they travelled on the Canning Stock Road along the wells to Kulyayi [Well 42] to Katajilkarr [Well 43] from there on to Kujuarri [Well 46]. That's where they used to spear bullocks, my father and Kuji's [Rosie Goodjie's] father.*

*At Natawalu an Aboriginal man speared a kartiya [white man], then that kartiya got a rifle and shot him. Right [at] Natawalu. Before there was a well there. That's the place I painted now. He was just coming to get water... then he saw that kartiya. He speared him then, near the water.*

**Mayapu Elsie Thomas, 2007**

During Canning's return to Wiluna in 1907, a member of his party, Michael Tobin, was fatally speared at Natawalu (Well 40). In the same moment, Tobin shot and killed Mungkututu, the Aboriginal man who speared him. Whatever the cause, in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories, the incident has come to symbolise the clash of cultures that defined the early days of the Canning Stock Route.

*We saw a native running towards us... fully armed. He was watching Tobin all the time... and just as the native moved with his spear Tobin raised his rifle and fired just after the native had discharged his spear which entered Tobin's right breast. The native fell.*

**Alfred Canning**, evidence given to the royal commission, 1908



***Natawalu***, 2007, by Mayapu Elsie Thomas, Mangkaja Arts, National Museum of Australia

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## Puntawarri 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Do you think it is important that Pukarlyi painted this with her granddaughter? Why?
- What are some things you have learnt from your grandmother?
- What sort of work do you think Pukarlyi did on the stations?
- Read the quote. How do you think Puarlyi feels about Puntawarri?



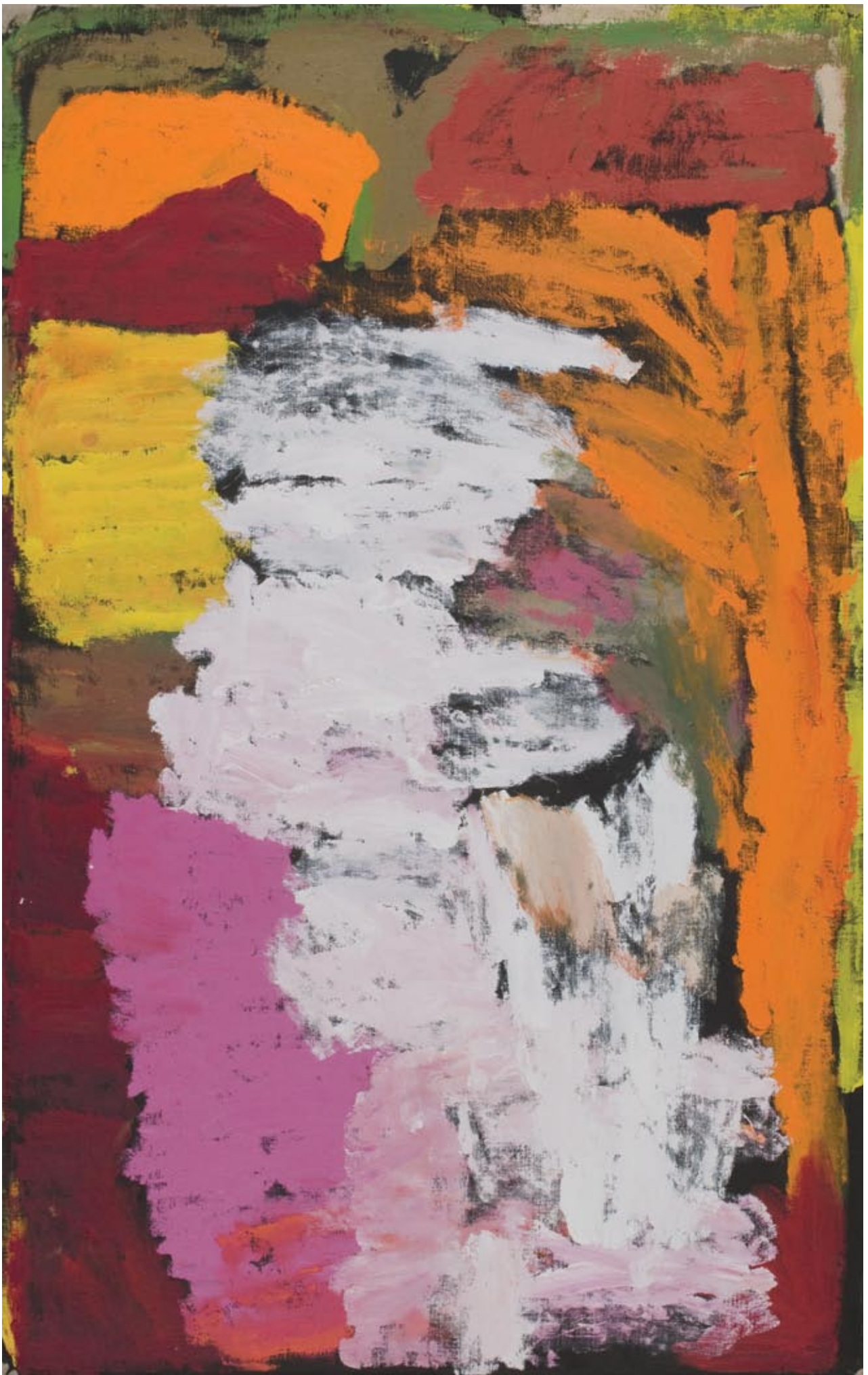
**Pukarlyi Milly Kelly**  
born about 1935  
Putjarra language group,  
Jigalong community

Pukarlyi was born at Jilakurru (Well 17). Her father's Country ranged from Jilakurru to Puntawarri, and Pukarlyi walked this Country as a child. Eventually her mother brought her in to the ration station, at old Jigalong on the rabbit-proof fence, to look for their extended family. There Pukarlyi met her husband, Pompey Charlie, and they worked on stations together for many years.

Puntawarri is the Country where Pukarlyi grew up as a young girl. This painting is a collaborative work by Pukarlyi and her granddaughter, Hayley Atkins, one of the curators of this exhibition.

*Puntawarri. My home. I was walking around little naked one!*

**Pukarlyi Milly Kelly**, 2009



*Puntowarri*, 2007, by Pukarlyi Milly Kelly and Hayley Atkins, Martumili Artists, National Museum of Australia

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## Canning Stock Route Country 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think it is important for Patrick to name the different wells he has painted?
- Why do you think Patrick has chosen the colours he uses in this painting?
- What do the wavy lines make you think of?
- Do you think you would remember a place you had left after many years?
- Ask your parents or grandparents if they can remember the place of their childhood.
- Ask them to describe it and then try and paint it.



**Patrick Olodoodi  
(Alatuti) Tjungurrayi**  
born about 1935.  
Manyjilyjarra, Kukatja  
language groups,  
Kiwirrkurra community

Patrick was born at Maylilli, between Kunawarritji (Well 33) and Kiwirrkurra. When he was young he walked the desert east of the Canning Stock Route with his older brother, Brandy. They regularly crossed the stock route and ultimately, in 1958, Patrick followed the chain of wells north out of the desert. After living many years in Balgo, he returned to live near his Country at Kiwirrkurra.

*This was where our people got together as one, along these wells. Our grandfathers too. They was all as one people, don't matter [that they're from] different tribes.*

In 2007 Patrick returned to the Canning Stock Route to retrace the journey he had made out of the desert 50 years earlier. Along the way he created this painting, which narrates the personal, historical and ancestral stories of his Country. The top line of white squares represents the waters from Kunawarritji north to Billiluna, and the bottom line, the Tingari Dreaming that dominates the artist's Country east of the stock route.

*Kunawarritji [Well 33], Nyipil [34], Kinyu [35], Pangkapini [between 35 and 36], Kilykily [36], Lipuru [37], Wajaparni [38], Kukapanyu [39], Natawalu [40], Tiru [41], Kulyayi [42], Katajilkarr [43], Jimpirinykarra [44], Jintijinti [45], Kujuwarri [46], Kartalapuru [47], Kurninarra [near 48], Kaningarra [48], Lampu [49], Jikarn [50], Kilangkilang, Kurrurungku [Billiluna] ... That long way that I'm travelling.*

**Patrick Olodoodi (Alatuti) Tjungurrayi**, (upon completion of the painting), 2007



**Canning Stock Route Country**, 2007, by Patrick Tjungurrayi, Papunya Tula Artists, National Museum of Australia

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## Cannibal Story about 2003

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

Before you tell students the story of the painting ask them these questions:

- What is happening in this painting?
- How does it make you feel?
- Read the quote by Yunkurra, then ask the following question:  
What parts of the painting tell you this is a dangerous place?

Have students find out more of the story surrounding Lake Disappointment and then create either a 2D or 3D artistic representation of this story.

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**Yunkurra Billy Atkins**  
born about 1940  
Putijarra language group,  
Jigalong community

Yunkurra is a painter and a carver. He is the most experienced Martu painter, having practised as an independent artist in the early 2000s, before other Martu artists were painting commercially. His work was selected for the 2003 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, and in 2004 he held his first solo exhibition.

Yunkurra was born at Palarji (Well 9) on the Canning Stock Route. While he avoided being taken away by missionaries as a child, his sister's story of escape from missionaries was told in the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. Yunkurra now lives at Jigalong, close to his home Country, which includes major sites around the stock route, such as Lake Disappointment, Savory Creek and Jilakurru.

*It's dangerous, that Country. I've seen that [cannibal] man, he's there and I know it. I don't know how white people go over there. If they were to run into him he would eat them straight out. Kumpupirntily, that's a no good place... leave it alone and have nothing to do with it at all. Just leave it how it is.*

Yunkurra Billy Atkins, 2008



**Cannibal Story**, about 2003, by Billy Atkins, Martumili Artists, National Museum of Australia



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## Kunkun 2008



1

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Why do you think four women joined together to paint this painting?
- Why do you think it was important for the artists to teach young women the song and dance for this Country?
- Can you think of an event in history that could be told using painting, song and dance?

### Divide students into groups.

- Ask each group to think of an event they can research and then do a presentation using painting, song and dance.



2

The central water in this painting is Kunkun, an important women's site belonging to Marlu Jukurrpa, or 'Kangaroo Dreaming'. This Jukurrpa is also significant within men's law and contains elements restricted to initiated men and women. After completing this painting, the artists travelled to Kunkun, where they taught young women the song and dance for this Country.



3

- 1 *I was born near Lipuru. We went from Lipuru to Wajaparni and Kilykily. They looked after me there as I grew. I went east to Nyipil, Kinyu and Pangkapini and kept on going towards Balgo, travelling with the drovers all the way.*

**Nyangapa Nora Nangapa**, born about 1916  
Manyjilyjarra language group, Kunawarritji community



4

- 2 *I had two mothers. My mother went to Balgo. I was travelling with my mother's sister, but I lost her in Pangkapini. Before I had [my daughter] Gloria, I used to carry another little boy as I travelled. My husband and I found him in the riverbed one day. We looked after him and then gave him to his grandmother.*

**Kumpaya Girgaba**, born about 1945  
Manyjilyjarra language group, Parnngurr community

- 3 *My husband was cheeky. He left me behind and I was still with my mum and dad. At Juntujuntu [Well 30] we joined up with Biljabu and Bidu families, and [with] Kumpaya and her family. We got picked up and went to Jigalong. [Later] I learnt how to paint in Kunawarritji by watching Wompi and Nyangapa.*

**Bugai Whylouter**, born about 1945  
Warnman, Kartujarra language groups, Kunawarritji community

- 4 *I used to cry for my mother to carry me around, but my brother would help look after me. My brother used to carry me, leave me in the shade and wet my hair. [He] would run to our parents to get the meat while I was sitting in the shade waiting.*

**Nora Wompi**, born about 1935  
Manyjilyjarra, Kukatja language groups, Kunawarritji and Balgo communities



**Kunkun**, 2008, by Nora Nangapa, Nora Wompi, Bugai Whyylouter and Kumpaya Girgaba, Martumili Artists, National Museum of Australia

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## Cattle at Durba Springs 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- What is happening in this painting?
- How would you describe this environment?
- Do you think droving would be easy work?
- What might be some of the difficulties?
- Find out more about the role Aboriginal stockmen played in Australia's cattle industry.



**Jawurji Mervyn Street**  
born 1950  
Goonlyandi, Walmajarri,  
Jaru language groups,  
Yiyili community

As a young man, Mervyn travelled south to Wiluna and worked as a stockman on Carnegie station. Here he met Martu people who had worked with his family on the stock route and built close relationships with them. He has family members in Wiluna, Billiluna, Balgo, Mulan and Fitzroy Crossing. In 2007, as part of the Canning Stock Route Project, Mervyn travelled the 'old bullocky road' for the first time.

*When I got to Wiluna I just look around and I couldn't believe I was in Wiluna. And I met them old people. They telling me all the droving story, 'We got family back in Wiluna, we got family right back in Fitzroy. We got a nyupa [husband or wife] from this way now. We got family'. And they been start calling their name [and I said], 'Ah! I know them old people.'*

**Mervyn Street, 2007**



***Cattle at Durba Springs***, 2007, by Mervyn Street, Mangkaja Arts, National Museum of Australia

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## Minyipuru 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

This story is about the Seven Sisters but the painting is about the Country transected by the Canning Stock Route.

- Can you see the waterholes in the painting?
- Can you see the Canning Stock Route which runs through the centre of the waterholes?
- The story told here takes place in this Country, but there are many stories about the Seven Sisters (the Pleiades).
- Do you know another story about the Seven Sisters?

Ask students to write their own story about the constellation known as the Seven Sisters.

Muni, Rosie and Dulcie are sisters who grew up in the Country depicted in this painting. They have described here one of the Martu women's most important Jukurrpa narratives: the story of the Seven Sisters or Minyipuru. In this story, the old man Yurla, who has been pursuing the Sisters, captures one of the women at Pangkapini. The Minyipuru trick him and rescue her.

*Poor old fella, he had a rough time. He was trying and trying and trying.*

Dulcie Gibbs, 2007

The Minyipuru promised to stay with the old man Yurla, but when he returned from collecting wood they were floating above his head, teasing him. Yurla made a ladder but the sisters pushed it over and laughed at him. When he collapsed, exhausted, they rescued their sister and flew away.



**Jugarda Dulcie Gibbs**  
born about 1947



**Muni Rita Simpson**  
about 1941-2008



**Mantararr Rosie Williams**  
born about 1943

Dulce, Muni and Rosie are all Manyjilyjarra language speakers. They live at Punmu and Kunawarritji communities.



*Minyipuru*, 2007, by Muni Rita Simpson, Rosie Williams and Dulcie Gibbs, Martumili Artists, National Museum of Australia

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## Tiwa 2008

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Name some of the elements you can see in the painting.
- How does this painting make you feel?
- Do you think this painting is important to Jartarr?
- Imagine you were Jartarr watching the drovers. What would you think of them?

Have students paint a favourite memory from their (early) childhood.

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**Jartarr Lily Long**  
born about 1940  
Warnman language group,  
Nullagine community

Jartarr's father was the famous Kimberley drover, Jamili. He fell in love with Jartarr's mother and tried, unsuccessfully, to steal her away from her husband and return with her to his Country in the Kimberley. Jartarr was born in Karlamilyi (Rudall River) and grew up with her Warnman father.

*This is the Canning Stock Route. This is the big hill where, a long time ago, my mother, father, my sister Amy and my brother used to live. We would sometimes climb up on that hill and see drovers. They put the government well [26] next to Tiwa jurnu [soak] when they were building the stock route.*

*Daddy was from Fitzroy side, droving to Tiwa (Well 26). He was going to steal my mother from my Warnman Daddy and take her [back to] Kimberley.*

**Jarter Lily Long, 2008-09**



*Tiwa*, 2008, by Lily Long, Martumili Artists, National Museum of Australia



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## Waruniya 2007

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- How did Helicopter get his name?
- Why do you think he may have taken this name?
- Why do you think Helicopter and Kupunyina stayed at Balgo?
- Why do you think their relatives walked to Balgo?

Read more about this story in the Walyja (Family) section.

Ask students to imagine they had to be airlifted out of their own backyard. Have them paint a picture of the view from the helicopter.



**Helicopter Joey Tjungurrayi**  
born about 1947  
Manyjilyjarra, Kukatja,  
Wangkajunga language groups,  
Balgo community

Helicopter was born at Nyakin, south of Jupiter Well. As a young boy he fell seriously ill, and in 1957 was flown out of his Country by helicopter to Balgo, and he has lived there ever since, having become a respected maparn (traditional healer) and artist. He returned to his Country for the first time in 2000.

In 1957 a mining survey party landed in a helicopter at Natawalu (Well 40) where a large group of people were living. Helicopter Joey Tjungurrayi and his mother's sister, Kupunyina, were both ill, and the survey party offered to take them to Balgo Mission for medical attention. From that time he became known as 'Helicopter'. When neither Helicopter nor Kupunyina returned, their relatives set off in groups to walk north to Balgo.

*Waruniya [soak] and Pilalyi rockhole. I lived around here with my mother and father. Nyirla is our Country. I was walking around everywhere in that Country, that was the last time. [Then] we travelled to them waterholes on the Canning Stock Road, until we came closer to Natawalu. That's where we saw a helicopter for the first time.*

Helicopter Tjungurrayi, 2008



**Waruwiya**, 2007, by Helicopter Tjungurrayi, Warlayirti Artists, National Museum of Australia

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## Girls painted up for dancing at the Ngumpan workshop 2008

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

- Look at the children in the photograph.  
How do you think they feel as they get ready to perform their dance?  
Who do you think is in the background?
- Do you know a dance or a song with actions that tells a story?
- Do you think using a story, a painting and a song or dance would be a good way to learn about your culture? Why?
- Compare ways of using song and dance to tell about your own culture. Think about opera, ballet, folk songs and folk dances, musicals and hip-hop. Why might some people value some of these forms above others? What does this tell us about our culture?

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Ngumpan community is located 90 kilometres south-east of Fitzroy Crossing. Most people living there today belong to the Walmajarri and Wangkajunga language groups.

Song and dance (*juju*) are also ways of telling stories. Many stories that are painted are also told in songs and dances.



Girls painted up for dancing at the Ngumpan workshop in Fitzroy Crossing, photo by Tim Acker, 2008