



# Ngkwarlerlaneme Modernism from Utopia, Central Australia

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In 1989, Janice Kngwarreye presented carvings of a human figure and a kangaroo to Rodney Gooch on the tiny Central Australian settlement of Ngkwarlerlaneme.<sup>1</sup> Gooch was then working for the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), which had taken on management of the artists of Utopia, 1,800 square kilometres of land that reverted to the traditional Anmatyerre and Alyawarre owners in 1980 after a successful land claim. He would go on to commission many projects with the artists, including watercolours, woodcuts, silkscreens, paintings on oval boards and round stretchers, as well as paintings on salvaged boots, bonnets and doors of abandoned cars.<sup>2</sup> The origins of the Ngkwarlerlaneme sculptures were not, however, in one of Gooch's projects. Instead, Janice Kngwarreye presented the first sculptures unexpectedly.<sup>3</sup> These unpainted, delicate carvings were the first of their kind. The enthusiasm with which Gooch received them encouraged the growth of a sculpture movement made up of around 20 Ngkwarlerlaneme carvers that persisted through the 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

This carving movement has largely been neglected in the discourse on Utopia's art. Instead, the paintings from this region, and especially those of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, have focused the attention of curators, scholars and the market. Emily is significant in the history of Australian art for being a master of modern painting – a 'genius', as a recent retrospective titled her.<sup>5</sup> Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture presents an alternative art history of Utopia. For it is the particular quality of the carvings to carry 'the aesthetic markers of modernist primitivism'.<sup>6</sup> As Elizabeth Harney and Ruth B. Phillips write, such works constitute a kind of 'counter-modernism, adopted and adapted by emerging modernists eager to reclaim lost traditions, articulate difference from their colonial occupiers, and engender community'. The complex origins of Ngkwarlerlaneme carving conceptualise one history of this 'counter-modernism' that is an alternative not only to the standard history of Euro-American modernism, but to Emily's own modernism.<sup>7</sup>

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Figure 1. *Twelve Men and an Echidna* exhibition, installation view, Utopia Art Sydney, 1989. Image courtesy of Christopher Hodges.

A second visitor to Utopia at this time was Christopher Hodges. He accompanied Gooch on this trip, and exhibited a group of the sculptures in *Twelve Men and an Echidna* at his Utopia Art Sydney gallery in 1989 (Figure 1). Hodges is well known for curating Emily's first solo exhibitions, but he also held the first exhibitions of Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture. Emily was a part of Utopia's painting movement that began in the same historical moment as Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture, and with Gooch's work on Utopia. Yet the differences between Emily's paintings and the Ngkwarlerlaneme sculptures could not be more marked. For while Emily's paintings were compared to the New York School of abstract modernism, Ngkwarlerlaneme sculptures of the period were instead figurative, carvings of animals and people in ceremonial dress that at first glance appear to belong to a traditional, pre-modern world.<sup>8</sup> This figuration is their modernism, as they carved the ceremonial and natural in the midst of the rising success of abstract paintings from the neighbouring camps of Utopia. Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture can be interpreted as a kind of riposte to the flat modernism of abstract painting that could be all too easily transposed into the white cube galleries of Australian cities, the artists instead turning to the explicit representation of ceremonial identities. For although the abstraction of Utopia's painters still represented the ceremonial, its deterritorialisation in these galleries made their subject more enigmatic for collectors, curators and critics of the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

Despite their differences, however, the content of these paintings and sculptures are often the same, and include the northern wild orange ceremony Atwakey, the women's ceremony Awelye, and Anyematy, the ceremony of the witchetty grub. While the reception of Utopia's paintings as abstract obscures their ceremonial subject, there is no mistaking the ceremonial forms of body-painting designs on the carved Ngkwarlerlaneme figures. Yet these, and the birds, dogs, echidnas and kangaroos made on the same camp, were not as enthusiastically collected as abstract paintings from Utopia, which instead resembled what collectors and institutions knew already as fine art. For the legacy of the New York School of abstract painting and its critics was to create abstraction as a universal currency,

as if abstract painting transcended its particular time and place. So it was that the pioneers of the Aboriginal desert painting movement in Australia, the Papunya Tula artists, found success only after abandoning the figuration of their earliest years, abandoning explicitly ceremonial subjects to produce an all-over dotted aesthetic. By the 2000s, the grip of abstraction on the market for desert painting was such that at least one manager of a remote art centre advised her artists to stop painting lizards and snakes, as it was going to be difficult for her to sell figurative paintings.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, the Ngkwarlerlaneme carvers documented distinct Aboriginal ceremonies and local animals. The story of this sculpture movement is one of vernacular modernism, which lies in an inverse relationship to the dominance of abstract desert painting – inverse because it is figurative rather than abstract, sculptural rather than painted, and identifiably Indigenous rather than resembling art that is not Indigenous.

Another aspect of Ngkwarlerlaneme carving of this period, and one that it shares with Emily, lies in the way that it complicates the gendered expectations of Aboriginal art. Emily blurred the gendered reception of desert art, her big and bold paintings occupying the place of the men that had until then dominated painting from the Central and Western Deserts. In the 1980s the Papunya movement's large canvases heroically declared the power of the artist's *tjukurrpa* or Dreamings. In the 1990s Roger Benjamin made the argument for Emily's work as a 'suspended feminine' that occupied the place of this heroic masculine.<sup>11</sup> The



Figure 2. Detail of untitled pokerwork from Utopia region, collected c. 1990. Private collection, Perth. Image courtesy of the author.

Ngkwarlerlaneme carvers also transcended the distinction between male and female genres: of male carvings of boomerangs, shields, spears and spearthrowers; and of women's pokerwork animals (Figure 2). These new forms were no longer a part of either the men's 'pseudo-traditional' artefact carving tradition, or the more recent market for pokerwork animals that had arisen in the Australian deserts.<sup>12</sup> Pokerwork animals were, however, an important precedent for the development of Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture, as they opened a market for figurative forms. Michael Boulter's *The Art of Utopia* (1991), an early book and important document on Gooch's projects, notes that, 'Up until the early 1980s, the only non-traditional sculptural work appears to have been done by the women: lizards and animals, some with designs burnt on with hot wire.'<sup>13</sup> Such animals were commonly made through the Central and Western Deserts as a way of making income from travellers and tourists. The genre first developed alongside the telegraph and train lines that opened up these regions to outsiders in the early twentieth century. Carved and burned in softwoods, pokerwork is a kind of 'souvenir' or 'ethno-kitsch' art, to borrow from Nelson Graburn's categories of Fourth World arts, which 'bear little relation to the traditional arts of the creator culture'.<sup>14</sup>

Graburn's early definitions of Fourth World arts are convenient for thinking through the ways in which Indigenous artists work within markets, but are not so useful for thinking about such arts as politically innovative or strategic. Sculpting animals, for instance, is often far from innocuous in Aboriginal Australia, and is tied to the ways in which these animals play a meaningful role in local communities. So that, for example, when Kanytjupayi Benson decided to begin making woven dogs in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, it was a controversial choice for other members of the local community. Fellow artist Elaine Warnatjura Lane opposed the move, saying that 'Other women made *tjanpi* dogs but I didn't and I told them not to either as it is our sacred animal.'<sup>15</sup> While Graburn's analysis critiques the ways in which outsiders make meaning from genres of tourist art, meanings from inside Fourth World communities are also at work in these art practices. The two meanings are not always commensurate, as what an animal signifies to an Indigenous community is likely to be very different to that for a consumer of Indigenous art.

Janice Kngwarreye's kangaroo and figure did not resemble the 'carved wooden snakes, goannas, possums and a variety of other decorated artefacts' that Gooch returned with from his first collecting trip after he was employed by CAAMA.<sup>16</sup> Absent from his list are the 'pseudo-traditional' items that would have been associated with men, such as fluted boomerangs, spears and shields, suggesting that the carvings for sale in the CAAMA shop were largely made by the women, who were also making batik. The market for male items may have been elsewhere, such as on neighbouring cattle stations, or at roadside stops on the nearby highway carved with a tomahawk and rasp, common tools on the cattle stations in the area.<sup>17</sup> On McDonald Downs Station, which borders what is now the Utopia homelands, the Chalmers family were keen collectors of weapons and other crafts, but they were far from being the only ones.<sup>18</sup>

Julia Murray, who worked with the women making batik fabrics during the 1980s, recalls that, 'the great difficulty we faced then was the absence of Aboriginal art galleries and of an art market hungry for exciting new work.'<sup>19</sup> When Gooch took on these artists in the late 1980s he began initiating different kinds of art projects on the Utopia settlements and selling the results further afield. Hodges, then an artist in Sydney, first took a consignment of batik silks to sell to his friends there, and came to represent an emerging market for art from the Utopia region in his Utopia Art Sydney. This market exploded in the 1990s amidst an increasing profile for Aboriginal art both nationally and internationally. Gooch's arrival at Utopia was timely, and his role in bringing about a renaissance of art there has subsequently been celebrated by curators and scholars.<sup>20</sup> He represented the artists for CAAMA from 1989 to early 1991, before forming his own company, Mulga Bore Artists. Janet's hardwood sculptures were, then, inspired by the new opportunities that Gooch represented to the Utopia artists. While not commissioned by Gooch, they were certainly born of the inspiration he gave these artists to sell work to the wider world.

Yet a close look at these first sculptures suggests that Janice may not have been entirely responsible for carving them, or at least not entirely. The distinction between gendered types of carving suggests that Janice may have presented these works to Gooch because it was the women who had customarily been dealing with the CAAMA shop and its representatives, while the style of carving suggests a male artist may have been behind them. The uncertainty around the attribution of the kangaroo and figure is recorded in Boulter's account of the moment at which Janice showed them to Gooch and Hodges:

Up until the late 1980s, the only non-traditional sculptural work appears to have been done by the women: lizards and animals, some with designs burnt on with hot wire, not unlike those produced by the Pitjantjatjara artists. These works were mainly sold to tourist outlets.

The first significant change came in early 1989 when Janice Kngwarreye, from the Ngkwarlerlaneme community of Utopia, carved a kangaroo and a small male figure ... about 50 centimetres tall. These two pieces were unlike anything that had been carved before – solid, quirky, individual and full of animation. She presented these figures out of the blue: there had been no indication of a change in her approach to carving.<sup>21</sup>

Boulter wants to put these carvings into a history of women's pokerwork, yet cannot because they are 'unlike anything that had been carved before' and came 'out of the blue'. The kangaroo is an animal typically associated with male ceremonies and hunting practices, and is also made from the hardwood used for 'pseudo-traditional carving', rather than the softwood used for women's pokerwork.

There are two other unpainted carvings that Gooch attributed to Janet in 1989. The first is what looks like a wombat, a burrowing Australian quadruped that does not live in the desert, but in the more fertile southern regions of Australia



Figure 3. Janet Ngkwarreye, Untitled, 1989. Janet Holmes à Court Collection.

(Figure 3). Here, the choice of subject is one that is not tied to the native or local, but may have been learned about from elsewhere, through a book or magazine, or from a Dreaming that had belonged to this region before the animal moved out of the area. The smooth, succinct grooves on its surface resemble the fine lines incised into the male genre of shield and spearthrower, as well as the women's coolamon, or carrying bowl. Marc Gooch, who worked alongside his uncle, Rodney Gooch, suggests that the wombat is in fact a collaboration between Janet and the sculptor Wally Pwerle.<sup>22</sup> It may be, Marc argues, that Pwerle carved the figure from the hardwood he would have worked with for 'pseudo-traditional' items, while Janet incised the grooved lines on its surface, as she might for a coolamon. Pwerle also carved a kangaroo for Gooch in 1989, in a second and subsequent example of this animal being carved by the Ngkwarlerlaneme group.<sup>23</sup>

Marc's reasoning is indebted to a fifth sculpture, *Kwertatje Man and Dogs* (1989), which is attributed jointly to both Janice and Pwerle (Figure 4).<sup>24</sup> This sculpture is different from the other four we have covered here, in that it is a man and two dogs, each one painted. The sculpture was the first to resemble the many humans and animals that would come to be carved by Ngkwarlerlaneme artists. Boulter reports that this introduction of colour happened in spite of Rodney rather than because of him, as the artists found commercial paints in a shop in Alice Springs, possibly house paints, and brought these back to the community.<sup>25</sup> It may have been, however, that the *Kwertatje Man and Dogs* is coloured with acrylic paint provided by Rodney Gooch for one of the painting projects he had commissioned. Without material analysis of these early sculptures, the precise source of the earliest paint for the sculpture movement may never be known. While the *Kwertatje*



Figure 4. Janice Kngwarreye and Wally Pwerle, Kwertatye Man and 2 Dogs, 1989. Janet Holmes à Court Collection.

*Man and Dogs* are black and white, subsequent works are coloured orange, white and red, their ceremonial figures faithful to the ochre colours of the events that they represent.

A second possible collaborator or artist behind the carving of the four unpainted sculptures is Janice's father and leader of the family group at

Ngkwarlerlaneme, Billy Morton Petyarre. When he began to paint on canvas, Morton painted kangaroos. He was also a prolific maker of boomerangs, spears and shields before Gooch's arrival, and would go on to become the most productive of the carving group. In 1988 and 1989 curator Judith Ryan reports that Morton made a 'series of wooden poles with snakes and goannas climbing them'.<sup>26</sup> Boulter describes one of these sculptures as a 'pole with two snakes climbing up it'.<sup>27</sup> Sculptures of snakes climbing trees, walking sticks adorned with snakes and carvings of pairs of snakes were commonly made throughout the Australian desert for sale.<sup>28</sup> Morton probably traded traditional weapons and the like with the local cattle station, who were known for their interest in collecting such items.<sup>29</sup> He went on to become the most prolific of carvers when Gooch began supplying tools. Stylistically, the human figure resembles little else in Morton's *oeuvre*. While the separation of the arms from the body in the human figure resemble Morton's fine carving skills, the protruding belly and the different lengths of the arms appear to be unique, suggesting once more that Janice, Pwerle or someone else was responsible.

It is worth setting the historical scene here, for these first sculptures were made at a unique moment in the history of Australia. They appeared not only as an Aboriginal art market was beginning to appear as a distinct phenomenon, but as a consciousness of the injustices afforded Aboriginal people were belatedly coming into public view. During the 1980s, revisions of Australian history turned to the evidence of massacres and frontier wars in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, while protests marred the government's attempts to celebrate the bicentenary of the invasion of the country in 1988.<sup>30</sup> During the 1990s, the Mabo Case proved Aboriginal people's entitlement to their ancestral land by overturning the legal presumption that Australia was *terra nullius* when Europeans settled it. Native Title legislation followed, empowering Aboriginal people to claim land where they could prove their connection to it. Yet by the end of the 1990s a less sympathetic government had curtailed these rights, while conservative historians began to question the evidence for these massacres.<sup>31</sup> So it was that the rise of Aboriginal art during the 1990s came to symbolise the contradictions of Australia's attitudes toward Aboriginal people, their histories and rights. As Rex Butler wrote of Emily Kngwarreye at the time, 'Her entry into the canon of the great white modernists is the exact equivalent to the repression and exclusion of Aboriginal people from everyday Australian life.'<sup>32</sup>

The alternative to making this transition to high art for Aboriginal artists, which was arguably much worse, was to remain in the realm of traditional and tourist art, which lacked both the economic opportunities and political valence afforded by exhibitions in city galleries. It was in this context that exhibitions of Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture are significant in facilitating a transition from one era of Aboriginal art to another. These exhibitions first took place in Hodges' Utopia Art Sydney, including *Twelve Men and an Echidna* (1989), *Men and Dogs* (1991) and *Little Friends* (1992) (Figure 5). These exhibitions combined carvings of the 'pseudo-traditional', including boomerangs, coolamons and dancing sticks, with dogs and kangaroos, to treat them all as art in a white cube gallery context.





Figure 5. *Men & Dogs* exhibition invitation, Utopia Art Sydney, 1991.



Figure 6. Detail from Mary Morton Kemarre, *Untitled (Camp Scene)*, 1989, acrylic and poster paint on canvas, 166.5 cm by 132.5 cm, private collection, Perth.

Commercially and critically, however, these carvings have largely remained out of sight of the Australian art world, especially when compared with the reception of paintings by Emily and other Utopia artists, such as Kathleen Petyarre. Even the batik work of the 1980s has since garnered more attention, with a major state gallery survey in 2008–9.<sup>33</sup> It is likely that this is because the paintings are abstract and thus not as evidently Aboriginal in what was, and remains, a highly politicised environment for Aboriginality in Australia.

When the Ngkwarlerlaneme artists turned to painting, their subjects were also figurative. They created a distinct genre of ‘Camp Scene’ paintings, of people living in the bush in humpies, going about their daily lives (Figure 6). It was typical of Gooch that once he saw these, he enthusiastically encouraged the genre, initiating a camp scene project across the communities in 1990, while Hodges first held an exhibition, *Camp Scenes*, in 1990. Brody describes the similarity between Ngkwarlerlaneme carvings to these ‘witty and occasionally what appear to be satiric observations in their portrayal of human life’.<sup>34</sup> Hodges describes them as ‘naive realism’, while Boulter describes the way that the figures in Audrey Kngwareye’s *Camp Scene* (1990) all appear in the foreground, and lack the illusion of distance that overlaid figures would otherwise give.<sup>35</sup> He traces this style back to the distinctive style of Ngkwarlerlaneme batiks, in their ‘showing composite images of foliage, footprints, tracks and animal life’.<sup>36</sup>

The inspiration for both carvings and paintings remained the specific Dreamings of this family and settlement. *Kwertatje Man and Dogs*, for example, is made after the same Dreaming subject as one of Janice’s batiks. But Janice did not identify this Dreaming to Gooch. The telling of the story was left to the ‘boss

woman' of the Ngkwarlerlaneme group, Mary Kemarre, who told Brody and Gooch that Janice's batik depicted the story of a Kurdaitcha man:

This story is about a Kurdaitcha boss who went hunting while his women collected witchetty grubs, yam seeds and lizards. When he returned he discovered that one coolamon full of witchetty grubs had been poached by a woman from somewhere else. The Kurdaitcha chased the woman who stole the witchetty grubs into Ngkawenyerre country where he became Dreaming in the shape of a large black rock.<sup>37</sup>

The *Kwertatye*, wearing body paint, is accompanied by his dogs; one of them has red eyes and can see in the night. The *Kwertatye*'s down-turned mouth expresses his anger at the woman who stole the witchetty grubs.<sup>38</sup> This story belongs to the country and camp at Ngkwarlerlaneme, a story that is the very reason for establishing a settlement there after the 1980 land claim.

Such Dreaming parallels can also be seen not only between the batiks and carvings, but also between batiks and camp scenes. Lucky Kngwarrye's batik *Ngkwarlerlaneme* (1988–9) is documented as such: 'Three men sit by their fire carving boomerangs, coolamons and shields; elsewhere two women and a child are digging for yams with a coolamon and billy by their side.'<sup>39</sup> Although its title is a secular one, and there is no evidence of ceremony in the painting, there is a rainbow at the top of the scene, overlooking a great snake that wends its way between bough shelters. The red and yellow that make up the rainbow are also visible in one of Lucky's carvings. This smiling figure from 1993 is 'showing a traditional ceremonial body paint design for the rainbow', so that implicit in the batiks are ceremonial figures carved in wood – ceremonies that tie the artist's works across different media together. Lucky is also a daughter of Morton, to a different mother than Janice, and in Morton's work it is possible to see the same witchetty grub and honey ant designs on carved figures and painted in camp scenes.

Rodney Gooch explains the distinctiveness of Ngkwarlerlaneme art in terms of the distance of each Utopia camp from each other. He explains that the artists of this region 'live in areas maybe even up to 50 miles apart. This has developed from a nook or camp – a style will develop from that camp which looks very much the same, but then you've got eight camps working, so you've got eight styles.'<sup>40</sup> In the 2000s a distinct landscape genre also arose at Ampilaywatja, another of Utopia's settlements. Their work combines landscapes with dotted fill, to create colourful, picturesque scenes that were also optically compelling. The origins of this art movement have not yet been the subject of research, but are likely to lie in the founding of an art centre, and the arrival of an art advisor, in the early 2000s. As with the Ngkwarlerlaneme story, the innovations of remote Australia lie in the inspiration and opportunity of cross-cultural encounter, yet the originality of these innovations, their vernacular, lies with the local artists themselves. Such genres may not remain within the camps that originated them, however. For while during the 1990s the Ngkwarlerlaneme artists were responsible for this distinct sculpture movement, in

the 2000s the practice was taken up across the Utopia region. Certainly, other residents of the Utopia region would have made sculptures in the Ngkwarlerlaneme style before the 2000s, but did not have made them regularly. In the 1990s as the Ngkwarlerlaneme group took up residence elsewhere across the homelands, sometimes in 'sorry camps' that followed funerals, carvings would be made in these places, and as others copied the practice, they were made by a bigger group of people. Yet it was not until the mid-1990s that sculpture became a more common practice across the region's settlements.<sup>41</sup>

Through the Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture movement it is possible to rethink the history of Australian modernism as it developed through the desert artists of Papunya and Utopia. For while the history of these art movements has largely been constructed through their flight to abstraction, the Ngkwarlerlaneme relied upon figuration to create a counter-modernism not only to the Euro-American story of modernism but also to this Aboriginal story of abstract painting. Ngkwarlerlaneme ceremonial figures were identifiably Aboriginal, and could not be mistaken, as Emily's paintings were, for a 'post-Aboriginal' expressionism.<sup>42</sup> In this, the Ngkwarlerlaneme movement represents a mode of realism, as their carved forms and bright colours signalled the ongoing ceremonial life of the Utopia region, and the ways in which this Aboriginal difference existed in relation to the modern world. Its artists adopted the strategy of the 'Kaapa School' of early Papunya, in making ceremonies visible to a market for Aboriginal art.<sup>43</sup> And like the 'Kaapa School', its innovation came out of time, unbidden, to transform the ways in which art was negotiated within desert communities. Through their politics of figuration, the Ngkwarlerlaneme artists also enable a rethinking of theories of modernity. For while scholars of global and multiple modernisms grapple with the universal dimensions of global capitalism as an experience of modernity, this local response turns instead to pre-capitalist forms. The Aboriginal experience of capitalism is one that renews tradition and its identities, in the insistent differences of ceremonial figures and neo-traditional camp scenes of pre-colonial life. Such works reconceptualise Aboriginal modernism as a return to tradition, to the vitality of the past and the identity it provides in the present. Yet this return is also selective, here overturning the gendered traditions of carving to insist upon a new, post-gendered genre of modern art. Unlike the male 'Kaapa School', however, and the dominance of women painters in Utopia, Ngkwarlerlaneme sculpture is indifferent to the gender of its carvers. The uncertain attribution of Janice's earliest sculptures is symptomatic of this, and of the way in which the Ngkwarlerlaneme artists created a modernism that complicates the story of an abstract and gendered desert-painting movement.

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## Notes

1. The human figure is photographed in Michael Boulter, *The Art of Utopia: A New Direction in Contemporary Aboriginal Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1991), 137.
2. Anne Marie Brody, *Utopia: A Picture Story* (Perth: Heytesbury Holdings, 1989), 31.
3. This history is told in Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 114–7, while Emily's beginnings and the first of Gooch's projects is documented in Brody, *Utopia*. The first paintings are documented in Brody, *Utopia Women's Paintings. The First Works on Canvases: A Summer Project 1988–89* (Perth: Heytesbury Holdings, 1989).
4. Artists active during the 1990s included Amy Petyarre, Angelina Pwerle, Audrey Kngwarreye, Audrey Petyarre, Casey Kemarre, David Kemarre, Hazel Kngwarreye, Janice Kngwarreye, Joy Kngwarreye, Katy Kemarre, Lily Kngwarreye, Mary Kemarre, Queenie Kemarre, Ruby Kngwarreye, Billy Morton and Wally Pwerle, as well as Janice Kngwarreye.
5. Emily's significance was first established for Australian audiences and within Australian art history by *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: paintings from Utopia*, a retrospective of her work at the Queensland Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1988. For arguments establishing the significance of Emily to Australian art history, see the catalogue for this exhibition, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: Paintings from Utopia*, exh. cat. (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane Australia, and MacMillan, 1998), 47–54; and the essays in a book published the same year, *Emily Kngwarreye: Paintings* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1998). The recent National Museum of Australia retrospective was called *Utopia: the Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, and its catalogue continues the discourse on her modernism. See Margo Neale, ed., *Utopia: the Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, exh. cat. (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2008).
6. Elizabeth Harney and Ruth B. Phillips, 'Introducing the Multiple Modernisms Project', *Artlink Australia* 37, no. 2 (2017): 39.
7. It is worth noting that revisionist scholars of modernism are hardly unified in their revised definitions of modernity. While Bill Anthes and Elaine O'Brien, for example, find Marshall Berman's theory of modernism suited to describing Native American and global modernism, respectively, Ian Mclean and Peter Osborne are highly critical of Berman's conflation of capitalism with modernity. See Bill Anthes, *Native Moderns:*

*American Indian Painting, 1940–1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), xx–xxi; Elaine O'Brien, 'General Introduction: The Location of Modern Art' in *Modern Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*, ed. Elaine O'Brien (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 10; Ian McLean, 'Contemporaneous Traditions: The World in Indigenous Art/Indigenous Art in the World', *Humanities Research* 19, no. 2 (2013): 55–7; Peter Osborne, 'Modernity is a Qualitative, Not a Chronological, Category', *New Left Review* 192 (March–April 1992): 65–84. At the time of writing, the Euro-American history of modern art remains the dominant story of modernism in undergraduate art history courses. These include Curtin University's VIS27: Modernism in Art and Design; Griffith University's 2104QCM: 20th Century Modernism; the University of Melbourne's AHIS10002: Modern Art: The Politics of the New; the University of New South Wales's SAHT2225: Irrational Modernism: Decadence, Deviance, Madness; and the University of Western Australia's HART2223: Modernism and the Visual Arts (a course the author teaches).

8. For comparisons of Emily's paintings to Jackson Pollock in the 1990s, see Terry Smith, 'Kngwarreye, Woman Abstract Painter', in *Emily Kngwarreye: Paintings* (Sydney: Craftsman House), 28, 30; and Roger Benjamin, 'A New Modernist Hero', in *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Alhalkere: Paintings from Utopia*, exh. cat. (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane Australia, and MacMillan, 1998), 47.
9. See, for example, Heather Ellyard, 'Big Yam Dreaming', *Art & Australia* 36, no. 4 (1999): 490.
10. Anonymous art centre manager, interview with the author, 2011.
11. Benjamin, 'A New Modernist Hero', 47–54. Recently in this journal, Jeanette Hoorn argued that Benjamin's interpretation is 'indecorous', but I think that Benjamin's point is not that Emily was not feminine, but that she was only able to occupy the masculine place of the genius because her femininity was ignored. Emily becomes a way to trace the limits of Linda Nochlin's argument that the concept of the artist genius is a function of masculine power. See Hoorn, 'Rejoinder to Review: Hilda Rix Nicholas and Elsie Rix's Moroccan Idyll, Art and Orientalism', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 17, no. 1 (2017): 126; and Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists? (1971)', *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, ed. Linda Nochlin (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 145–78.

12. Regarding 'commercial fine arts or pseudo-traditional arts ... although they are made with eventual sale in mind, they adhere to culturally embedded aesthetic and formal standards'. See Nelson H. H. Graburn, 'Introduction: Arts of the Fourth World', in *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural expressions from the Fourth World*, ed. Nelson H. H. Graburn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 6.
13. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 116.
14. Graburn, *Ethnic and Tourist Arts*, 6.
15. Quoted in John Carty, 'Purnu, Tjanpi, Canvas: A Ngaanyatjarra Art History,' in *Ngaanyatjarra: Art of the Lands*, ed. Tim Acker and John Carty (Perth: University of Western Australia Publishing, 2012), 29.
16. Philip Batty, 'The Gooch Effect: Rodney Gooch and the Art of the Art Advisor', in *Gooch's Utopia: Collected works from the Central Desert*, exh. cat. (Adelaide: Flinders University Gallery, 2008), 28.
17. Marc Gooch and Janet Pierce, interview with the author, 2015.
18. See Jennifer Isaacs, 'Anmatyerre Artist', in *Emily Kngwarreye: Paintings*, 17.
19. Julia Murray, 'Drawn Together: The Utopia batik phenomenon', in *Across the Desert: Aboriginal batik from Central Australia*, exh. cat. (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria), 121.
20. See Philip Batty, 'The Gooch Effect', 26–31; Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 28–30; Brody, 'Reflections on the Rodney Gooch Files', in *Indigenous Archives: The Making and Unmaking of Aboriginal Art*, ed. Darren Jorgensen and Ian McLean (Perth: University of Western Australia Publishing, 2017), 25–49; Rodney Gooch and Louise Haigh, 'Louise Haigh Talks to Rodney Gooch', in *Gooch's Utopia*, 20–2; Christopher Hodges, 'Rodney Gooch: A Full Life in the Desert', in *Gooch's Utopia*, 24–5; Fiona Salmon, 'Gooch's Utopia', in *Gooch's Utopia*, 12–9; Chrischona Schmidt, 'Rodney Gooch's Role and Influence in the Development of the Utopia Art Movement', *International Journal of the Arts in Society* 5, no. 6 (2011): 149–61.
21. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 115.
22. Marc Gooch and Janet Pierce, interview with the author, 2015.
23. This is photographed in Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 125.
24. This is photographed in Brody, *Contemporary Aboriginal Art: from the Robert Holmes a Court Collection* (Perth: Heytesbury Holdings, 1990), 90.
25. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 116.
26. Judith Ryan, *Colour Power: Aboriginal Art Post-1984*, exh. cat. (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2004), 157.
27. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 116.
28. The earliest surviving snake carving might be a walking stick with a snake wrapped around it that was collected from 1930 to 1935 in the mining town of Payne's Find in Western Australia. With thanks to Chris Malcolm of John Curtin Gallery, who told me it is in the Berndt Museum of Anthropology. Snakes wrapped around trees were also sculpted by the early Papunya artists. One from 1973 by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri is in the National Museum of Australia's collection, accession number 2005.0078.0001.
29. Marc Gooch and Janet Pierce, interview with the author, 2015.
30. The most influential revisionist history was Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier: Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1982).
31. The most notorious of these is Keith Windshuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History*, Vols 1 and 3 (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2003 and 2007).
32. Rex Butler, 'The Impossible Painter', *Australian Art Collector* 2 (1997): 45.
33. *Across the Desert: Aboriginal Batik from Central Australia* was held at the National Gallery of Victoria from October 10, 2008 to February 1, 2009. See *Across the Desert: Aboriginal Batik from Central Australia*.
34. Brody, *Utopia: A Picture Story*, 31. Audrey Petyarre's *Ngkwarlerlaneme Scene* (1989) is documented in this book on p. 33, and in *Contemporary Aboriginal Art*, exh. cat. (Perth: Heytesbury Holdings, 1990), 75. See also Audrey Kngwarreye's *Camp Scene* (1990) in Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 92, as well as in her *Camp Site* (1989) and in Mary Kemarre, *Camp Scene* (1990), reproduced in *Gooch's Utopia*, 62 and 63. Audrey and Mary were two of the first sculptors from Ngkwarlerlaneme.
35. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 64. Hodges cited in Christine Nicholls, 'Ronnie and Co: The Making of the Gooch collections', in *Gooch's Utopia*, 39. Original italics removed.
36. Boulter, *The Art of Utopia*, 62.
37. Brody, *Utopia: A Picture Story*, 150. Brody's story of collecting this story is in the same publication, 16–17.
38. This is likely to be taken from documentation written on behalf of the artists by Rodney Gooch, and is reproduced in *Contemporary Aboriginal Art*, exh. cat. (Perth: Heytesbury Holdings, 1990), 112.
39. Brody, *A Picture Story*, 152.
40. Louise Haigh and Rodney Gooch, 'Louise Haigh talks to Rodney Gooch', in *Gooch's Utopia*, 22.
41. Marc Gooch and Janet Pierce, interview with the author, 2015.
42. See Rex Butler, 'Beyond the Revolution: Is Aboriginal Art as we know it finished?', in *How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Contemporary Art*, ed. Ian McLean (Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art, 2011), 322.
43. See Vivien Johnson, *Once Upon a Time in Papunya* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2010), 11–43.

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