



REMEMBERING (WALALA)

KUMANTJAYI TJAPALTJARRI

Front cover:
Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri
Tingari 2003 acrylic on linen 60x60cm

Back cover: Remembering Kumanjayi
(Walala) Tjapaltjarri installation view
Photo: Mick Richards

When he died, someone should have been on the phone to Anthony Albanese saying, 'Prime Minister, one of the Pintupi Nine has died, and we just wanted to let you know'. That's how important it is. This should be a moment that the nation acknowledges.

- Gallerist Adam Knight 2026
Financial Review

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REMEMBERING (WALALA) KUMANTJAYI TJAPALTJARRI

13 October - 21 November 2026

Remembering Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri opens a window into Walala's extraordinary artistic career, comprising 30 works spanning across 1999-2026 that include sculptures, works on paper, paintings, and collaborations. Belonging to the 'Pintupi Nine,' as dubbed by international news outlets, Walala and his family emerged in 1984 from their nomadic lifestyle in Gibson Desert, where they had made no contact with non-Aboriginal people, to join relatives in the Pintupi community of Kiwirrkurra near the WA/NT border.

From 1991, Dr George Tjapaltjarri took Walala under his wing and mentored him in his transition from a nomadic lifestyle to living in the 20th century. He soon began painting Tingari designs (relating to men's ceremonial ground and body painting) in the recognisable Pintupi style of detailed dots and circles. In the 1990s, painting alongside Dr George with Gallery Gondwana (Alice Springs) nurturing his free-spirited attitude and cheerful optimism, Walala's distinctive geometric designs blossomed, as seen in *Tingari Cycle*. Soon after, he met Michael Eather, artist and director of FireWorks Gallery, and with several interstate visits across Australia, Walala was ushered into experimental artistic territory and a new era of abstraction and materiality.



Dr George Tjapaltjarri. Photo: John Kean

*In accordance with Warlpiri cultural protocol, it is customary not to speak the name of a deceased person during the mourning period instead it is common practice to use Kumantjayi as a placeholder name. The family have granted permission for use of Walala's name in the title of the exhibition.



1984 photograph of the Pintupi Nine Photo: Kiwirrkurra community/ABC Archive



Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri *Tingari Cycle* 1999 acrylic on linen 130x61cm

Through a series of workshops in both Alice Springs and at the FireWorks Gallery Campfire Group studio during 2001 and 2004, Walala experimented with pure linear compositions and no dotting. Drawing with ink on paper Walala's Tingari designs would be transposed into significant sculptural forms. This all took place in the company of artists such as Laurie Nilsen, Joanne Currie Nalingu, and Elton Cole, who drew on Indigenous cultural knowledge in their artistic practice while continually experimenting with contemporary processes and materials. *Tingari Study VI* demonstrates the first stage of Walala's newfound artistic practice, where ink on paper is utilised to isolate the stark lines and composition of the Tingari style. The drawings would then be transposed into laser-cut steel and timber sculptures, imbuing the Tingari designs with steadfast physicality and dimension; bridging cultural memory with the contemporary.

Honouring Walala's seminal works and extending on his commitment to experimentation, his sculptures were later recast in bronze and patina across 2021 and 2024. In a recent essay, Dr Marie Geissler proposes that, "This collection possesses a powerful ambiguity. Their positive and negative spaces are as important as their physical mass.... The transformation is significant because it does not simply turn a painting into an object. It changes the fundamental experience of Walala's visual language."



Michael Eather & Tjapaltjarri in the studio 2001



Left: Kumanjari (Walala) Tjapaltjarri Tingari Study V 2024 ink on Arches paper 76x56cm FW22544
Right: Walala Tjapaltjarri & Campfire Group Artists Tingari (classic first edition) 2001 rusted steel 140x28cm FW23290

In August 2026 Walala suffered a stroke and passed away In Alice Springs. In September, Walala and Michael's collaborative work, *We are Still Creating Ourselves II*, was announced winner of the Sunshine Coast National Art Prize.

Michael Eather recently shared, "I feel so very privileged to have known and worked alongside Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri for so many years. Sharing a national art prize with him so soon after his passing feels like the earth just winked at us a little bit. Old mate always had a cheeky laugh and I'm sure he's smiling now...We enjoyed many workshops together painting over maps and different textured backgrounds ...he was always so excited to be trying some new colours and patterns, and keeping his ancient stories alive and vital in new frameworks. Our work together was always casual and spontaneous.

Tjapaltjarri will always be fondly remembered around Alice Springs as the smiling and cheerful artist who painted his distinctive Tingari patterns in a particular style that he completely owned. They were his origin stories and he never forgot them.

He collected many friends in the art world, both black and white, in Australian and overseas...he travelled several times to Brisbane and Sydney and also to France and Switzerland...he spoke only a little English but with his charming disposition and attractive paintings he communicated with all folks in that marvellous language of understanding."

Remembering Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri provides audiences the opportunity to witness this very artistic transformation that has solidified Walala's legacy on both a national and international stage.



Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri & Michael Eather *We are still creating ourselves II* 2026 acrylic & archival ink on canvas 99x150cm



Michael Eather & Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri Alice Springs 2026

Remembering Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri

	FW23143 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Cycle</i> 1999 acrylic on linen 130x61cm \$5500		FW8322 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari (gold & silver series)</i> 2004 acrylic on canvas 90x90cm \$6000		FW23141 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Untitled</i> 2008 acrylic on canvas 120x29cm \$2750		FW22549 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Study X</i> 2024 ink on Arches paper 76x56cm \$1500
	FW23290 Walala Tjapaltjarri & Campfire Group Artists <i>Tingari (classic first edition)</i> 2001 rusted steel 140x28x30cm \$12000		FW8313 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari (gold & silver series)</i> 2004 acrylic on linen 120x55cm \$3600		FW23139 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Untitled</i> 2008 acrylic on canvas 51x53cm \$1500		FW22547 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Study VIII</i> 2024 ink on Arches paper 76x56cm \$1500
	FW5138 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari</i> 2001 ink on paper 77x57cm \$1800		FW5119A Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari</i> 2004 ink on paper 57x19cm \$495		FW23138 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Untitled</i> 2008 acrylic on canvas 51x54cm \$2250		FW22545 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Study VI</i> 2024 ink on Arches paper 76x56cm \$1500
	FW5134 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari cycle</i> 2001 ink on paper 77x57cm \$1800		FW5119B Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari</i> 2004 ink on paper 19x57cm \$450		FW23137 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Untitled</i> 2008 acrylic on canvas 51x53cm \$2250		FW22544 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Study V</i> 2024 ink on Arches paper 76x56cm \$1500
	FW5121 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari</i> 2001 ink on board 66x13cm \$495		FW4992 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari (gold & silver series)</i> 2004 acrylic on linen 90x60cm \$2750		FW20972 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Arrangements I A/P</i> 2022 bronze 60x38x12cm \$15000		FW22981 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri & Michael Eather <i>We are still creating ourselves VI</i> 2025 acrylic on canvas 100x100cm \$6600
	FW23098 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari</i> 2003 acrylic on linen 60x60cm \$2750		FW4990 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari (gold & silver series)</i> 2004 acrylic on canvas 90x60cm \$2750		FW22597 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Pattern Arrangements IV (2 sisters)</i> 2024 Bronze & patinas, steel & 2pac base 44x34x10cm \$15750		FW23408 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri & Michael Eather <i>Colour Mapping II</i> 2026 Acrylic on canvas 60x60cm \$2200
	FW8328 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari (gold & silver series)</i> 2004 acrylic on linen 60x60cm \$1850		FW23142 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Untitled</i> 2008 acrylic on canvas 55x59cm \$2250		FW22595 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri <i>Tingari Pattern Arrangements II (tall stack)</i> 2024 Bronze & patinas, steel & 2pac base 111x64x25cm \$40000		FW23407 Kumanjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri & Michael Eather <i>Colour Mapping</i> 2026 Acrylic on canvas 60x60cm \$2200

(Walala) Kumantjayi Tjapaltjarri

Born: c. 1960 Western Desert NT

Died: 2026, Alice Springs

Language: Pintupi

Country: Wilkinkarra

Region: Kiwirrkurra WA

Dubbed the Pintupi Nine, The Lost Tribe or Last Nomads by international news outlets, Walala, his two brothers and three sisters lived a traditional, nomadic way of life in the Gibson Desert near Lake Mackay (WA/NT border) having no contact with non-Aboriginal people until 1984. After the death of the patriarch of the family a few years earlier, the group went in search of relatives on the outskirts of the Pintupi community of Kiwirrkurra.

Walala began his artistic career in 1991 in the classic Pintupi dot and circle style depicting men's Tingari designs which relate to men's ceremonial ground and body painting.

Walala quickly developed his own distinctive approach to painting, abstracting and simplifying the Tingari designs with a minimalist approach, and his unique style evolved as boldly graphic. He worked primarily with Gallery Gondwana in Alice Springs and was celebrated with exhibitions across Australia and overseas.

The most significant development of Walala's artistic language has been its transformation into steel and timber sculpture beginning in 2001. These sculptures were developed through a process of sustained experimentation over 25 years between Walala Tjapaltjarri, Michael Eather and the Campfire Group studio projects in Brisbane. However, since 2021, a selection of Walala's scaled up forms have been cast in bronze, representing a remarkable spatial extension of the rectangular Tingari-related imagery that had long characterised his paintings and drawings.



Kumantjayi (Walala) Tjapaltjarri Alice Springs 2024



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