

## ***Dinni Kunoth Kemarre***

**Language: Anmatyerre**

Born on Utopia Station in the Northern Territory in 1954, Kunoth Kemarre has only recently taken up his artistic work after many years as a stockman on stations throughout the Eastern Desert. He works in the Anmatyerre sculptural tradition, one with deep roots across many generations in Central Australia.

This sculptural tradition, customarily restricted to spirit forms and people together with some animals and ceremonial designs, has recently seen these prescriptive cultural protocols lifted. Kunoth Kemarre's work reflects this with a burgeoning diversity of carvings featuring rodeo stars, historical dioramas and an outstanding group of sporting celebrities representing his family's favourite player on each of the 16 Australian Football League teams.

Kunoth Kemarre lives at Utopia, a remote outstation 270 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs. Isolation hasn't hindered his innovation, however. Drawing on his experiences as a stockman and his encounters with unique individuals during a life well lived, he produces brightly coloured polychrome carvings in *Erythrina vespertilio* wood. The limitations of the timber from this small straggly tree are the only material restrictions to a practice driven by a desire to share the stories of contemporary Indigenous life in remote Australia. His work links traditions developed over generations with the changing realities of the present, incorporating stories rich in today's Indigenous experience. Each piece shows a solidarity with past traditions while confronting contemporary change and challenges with wit and humour.

Since 2005 Kunoth Kemarre's innovative work has found an enthusiastic audience throughout Australia. It has been exhibited at AFL World, Melbourne, as well as in the 2008 Basil Sellers Art Prize, the 25th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award and the Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Art Award. In Western Australia his works are represented in the collection of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology and the Kerry Stokes Collection.

(Author: Gary Dufour)