

## ***Josie Kunoth Petyarre***

**Language: Anmatyerre**

Having begun her career in the early 1980s with the Utopia Women's Batik Group, in 1988 Josie Kunoth Petyarre started painting with the Utopia Women's Painting Summer Project. Utopia is recognised internationally for its batik and painting traditions, through which stories of country are told and shared. Kunoth Petyarre lives with her partner, Dinni Kunoth Kemarre, and their family at the remote outstation of Utopia, 270 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs.

Since 2005 Kunoth Petyarre has been making sculptures in the Anmatyerre tradition, developing a rich repertoire of imagery that includes birds and animals as well as furniture and vehicles drawn from the everyday world around her. The inspiration for much of her work comes from strong bonds of community combined with everyday activities of Indigenous life today in remote Australia. Her work reflects the confidence of someone secure in her cultural traditions, at the same time showing a vivid spontaneity in her response to the challenges of everyday life.

The flair and drama of Kunoth Petyarre's brightly coloured sculptures of unexpected everyday objects function to a large degree as portraits of daily life. Her recent paintings extend from this on a grand scale to include pictographic representations of town sites and country, and subjects such as the 2007 Northern Territory intervention and bush football carnivals as well as perhaps most spectacularly her experiences of a trip to Melbourne.

Her large-scale paintings such as Melbourne story 2007 describe the events and discoveries of an Indigenous couple in urban Australia in the lead-up to AFL Grand Final week. Kunoth Petyarre's paintings of the quotidian speak of tradition and change with a truly distinctive and innovative voice.

In 2008 her work has been presented in the Basil Sellers Art Prize at the Ian Potter Museum, Melbourne, the 25th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, the Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Art Award and La Culture en Couleur, Paris. In Western Australia her works are represented in the collection of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology, the Holmes à Court Collection and the Kerry Stokes Collection.

(Author: Gary Dufour)