

FORT GANSEVOORT

Fort Gansevoort Announces U.S. Representation of Artists from Iwantja Arts of South Australia



Kaylene Whiskey, Wonder-Kungka, 2021, Acrylic on linen, 48 x 32 inches.

Fort Gansevoort is pleased to announce the gallery's United States representation of Kaylene Whiskey, Vincent Namatjira, and Tiger Yaltangki, three leading members of the indigenous Indulkana Community in the northwestern region of South Australia on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. All three artists are part of Iwantja Arts, one of eleven indigenous owned and governed art centers included in the APY Art Centre Collective. Often the only non-government source of income for the Anangu peoples, art centers like Iwantja Arts, which was founded in 1980 by artist Alec Baker, are vital cultural and economic institutions that protect and promote the legacies of artistic production spanning generations of artists. Iwantja Arts supports the artistic practices of more than forty members, working across various mediums, including painting, sculpture, video art, and printmaking.

Beginning June 24th, Fort Gansevoort will present its first exhibition in collaboration with Iwantja Arts, featuring new works by Whiskey, Namatjira, and Yaltangki, titled *Spirits, Popstars, and Royals*. This online presentation is a precursor to the forthcoming 2022 exhibition with the three artists at Fort Gansevoort.

Vincent Namatjira

A winner of the 2020 Archibald Prize, Vincent Namatjira's bold portraits explore the complexities of colonial histories and their lasting effects on Aboriginal Australians. Inserting his own likeness into many of his works, Namatjira often renders himself in fictional encounters with global, contemporary political

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figures including Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and Queen Elizabeth II. Painting with broad strokes in acrylic, Namatjira often exaggerates the physical features and expressions of his subjects to satirical effect. *Spirits, Popstars and Royals* features a selection of self-portraits in which the artist depicts himself juxtaposed with members of the British Royal Family in various improbable settings, thereby subverting the power structures of his interlocutors. This artistic strategy speaks to the complicated relationship between influential political figures on the world stage and the entrenched history of marginalization of the Indigenous Indulkana Community. Through his use of irony, Namatjira reclaims the power to document his own story.

Vincent Namatjira was born in Alice Springs, Australia in 1983. His work has been exhibited at the British Museum, London; TarraWarra Museum of Art, Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; the Australian Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Hazelhurst Gallery, Gympie; THIS IS NO FANTASY, Melbourne; and the Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria. The artist has received awards and honors including the Archibald Prize and the Ramsey Art Prize. His work is held in several public collections including the British Museum, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

Kaylene Whiskey

Kaylene Whiskey's work celebrates heroic women, pop culture idols, and traditional Anangu culture to capture the blended reality that is contemporary life in a remote Indigenous community of Central Australia. Her practice links the traditional culture of her community's elders with the experiences of a younger generation that has grown up with the contemporary influence of Western media. This intergenerational complexity can be seen in her works on view in *Spirits, Popstars and Royals*, which combine the stylistic qualities of Aboriginal dot painting with modern subject matter. Whiskey's chosen icons – including Wonder Woman, Tina Turner, and Dolly Parton – are depicted interacting with native plants and wildlife, and engaging in traditional Anangu activities like hunting, collecting bush tucker, and cultivating *mingkulpa*, a native tobacco plant.

Rendering her figures in bright colors and contrasting scale, Whiskey fills the entire surface of her works with a kaleidoscope of dense design. With visual dynamism, her paintings express a joyous energy often associated with the escapism and frivolity of popular television, music, and advertising. Utilizing speech bubbles, her subjects often humorously quip about their fantastic surroundings. Painted while the artist listens to classic rock, pop and country music, Whiskey's work is packed with irreverent comedy and cross-generational influences from both traditional and Western cultures.

Kaylene Whiskey was born in Indulkana on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in 1976. Her work has been exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Gympie; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and the Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs. The artist has received awards including the Digital Art Prize, Heathcote Cultural Precinct, Melville; General Painting Award, Telstra NATSIAAs Awards, MAGNT, Darwin; and the Sir John Sulman Prize, AGNSW, Sydney. Her work is held in several public and private collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Artbank, Australia; ACMI,

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Melbourne; Fondation Opale, Switzerland; Sims Dickson Collections; and the Heathcote Cultural Precinct, Melville, WA.

Tiger Yaltangki

Tiger Yaltangki's vividly colored canvases, often including elements of fantasy, portray contemporary life in the Indulkana community where he resides. His artworks are directly influenced by the land itself, as well as Anangu culture, music by ACDC and Hank Williams, and a fondness for science fiction. Yaltangki's acrylic paintings on canvas are typically devoted to depicting Pitjantjatjara Mamu, malevolent spirits appearing in traditional stories that are told to children in an effort to keep them from exploring dangerous places. In his paintings on view in *Spirits, Popstars and Royals*, these entities take on disproportionate forms as upright ghosts with toothy grins, bulging eyes, and flailing limbs. These figures hold guitars, suggesting a performance, and are surrounded by layered patterns that float weightlessly in the picture plane. Yaltangki's surrealistic works acknowledge the intricacies of modern Indigeneity and offer a nuanced language to redefine our perceptions of art in the desert.

Tiger Yaltangki was born in Indulkana on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in 1973. His work has been exhibited at Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria; Fondation Opale, Lens, Switzerland; ACCA, Melbourne; Westspace Gallery, Melbourne; and the Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs. The artist's work is held in collections including Artbank, Australia; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Berndt Museum, Perth; Western Australia Parliament House Art Collection, Canberra; and Fondation Opale, Switzerland, among others.