

ingwepen
rwa
kwatyel tyerrelheyel
alpeyt lyeherrwem

first light glitters gold,
floods charge ghostly gums, fire,
then flowers unfold

All that glitters... poetics of the Barkly bears witness to the region's hard beauty, forged by belting heat, violent floods, and rwa (wildfire). Artists sing the treasures of arid plains, vast skyland and the mythic, elemental, and cosmogenic forces that inhabit them. Their enchanting expressions of country are underscored by the power and tenacity of tradition, the ancestral sublime and the uncanny.

*Anything can happen. This is the outback.*¹

Rita Beasley paints a powerful incantation of country. Dramatic ghost gums are set against blocks of rich textured colour while scattered dotting infuses the sparse canopies and precious shade. Several paintings sparkle with constellations of light. Native birds and rainbows mark the visitation of rain on parched lands. Rains recede and fires scars fade into drifts of diminutive blossoms, the guardians of potent medicines. Clusters form fields of yellow, undulating with rwar (wind) while screaming ilenty, (galahs) cut the silence and murmurations of ateherr (budgerigar) flash through blue skies. Kwatyel, (flood water) bellows through lytwelepenty escarpments. The ancient landscape makes its presence felt. These are the big stories of country. Eons inhabit her world.

Heading north towards lytwelepenty, sun-worn billboards mark Wycliffe Well, the UFO Capital of Australia. Stories of alien trespass are told to capture the attention of passing tourists. Jesse Marlow's *Hulk* is joined by a waxy Elvis and a green-skinned alien - an eccentric cast of characters make a desolate tableau. For all the loudness of its décor Wycliffe's heavy silence is upset only by the occasional roar of passing road trains. Lone travellers feel a prickle on their necks as a thousand cartoon eyes look on: kitsch tributes to a mostly forgotten yarn.

But Wycliffe is not the Barkly's only claimant of UFOs. Flying mewtek (cars), said to kidnap stranded travellers, and moving lights are occasionally seen by residents of communities nearby. Hostile intrusions by strange figures come in the night, stirring primordial fears exacerbated by extreme isolation.

This is a long, long, long time ago story - the old people used to tell us.
A big monster, like a gorilla or a monkey - a hairy one.
He comes along from out west.
That monster sneaks up when people are sleeping.
He gets them, grabs them, puts them over his shoulder and takes them.
He sits there and eats them. Like a kangaroo.
He finishes them off.
*All the old people used to tell us...*²

The old stories and altyerr (Dreaming) like magical tales from many cultures are augmented by the threat of the maleficent. Susannah Nelson's clipped compositions are simple poems. Stencilled configurations intensify the everyday with their simplicity.

Arresting characters occupy a near-empty stage set with motifs of cars, music and marches, of fairy tales, ceremony, and biblical parables. Ordinary, beautiful, and occasionally sinister.

*the birdless wing
shimmers
heralding death.*

Sparkling star trails fade into dew jewelled mornings as desert life greets the sun. Turning east off the Stuart Highway the red dirt road is lined with spritely blossoms. lytwelepenty shines in the distance and fields of wildflowers glisten with harvest, these are the golden treasures of the Barkly.

The Artists of the Barkly Collective represents about fifty Aboriginal artists living in five remote communities across the Barkly region: Mungkarta, Kulumindini (Elliott), Owairtilla (Canteen Creek), Tennant Creek and Wutunugurra (Epenarra). The Collective includes seven language groups; Alyawarr, Kaytetye, Mudburra, Jingili, Warumungu, Warlpiri and Warlmanpa.

The Collective is facilitated by Barkly Regional Arts, a not-for-profit multi-disciplinary art centre based on Warumungu Country. Barkly Regional Arts collaborates with remote Indigenous communities to foster access, development, and recognition of arts in the Barkly. Melbourne based photographer Jesse Marlow has been visiting the Barkly for several years and completed a residency with Barkly Regional Arts in December 2022.

- Katie Lynch

Curated by Katie Lynch and Dr Erica Izett in partnership with Coconut Studios

Acknowledgements:

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Coconut Studios is located in Larrakia land. We pay our respects to Larrakia ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging and extend this respect to the Traditional Custodians of the Barkly Region and their ancestors. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Supported by:



Coconut Studios



1. Annette Nungala Peterson on *Busy Day*,
Davenport Ranges, 2021

2. Susannah Nakamarra Nelson
on *Gorilla Man*, 2022

Coconut Studios and Barkly Regional Arts presents:

June 16–July 23, 2023

All that glitters... poetics of the Barkly



Aileen Napaljarri Long, Jessie Kemarr Beasley, Julie Pwerl Beasley, Jesse Marlow, Jessie Kemarr Peterson, Kaye Pwerl Beasley, Lindy Nungarrayi Brodie, Lorna Pwerl Corbett, Pammy Kemarr Foster, Rita Kemarr Beasley, Susannah Nakamarra Nelson, Susie Ngwarrey Peterson, Vicky Napurrurla Pope



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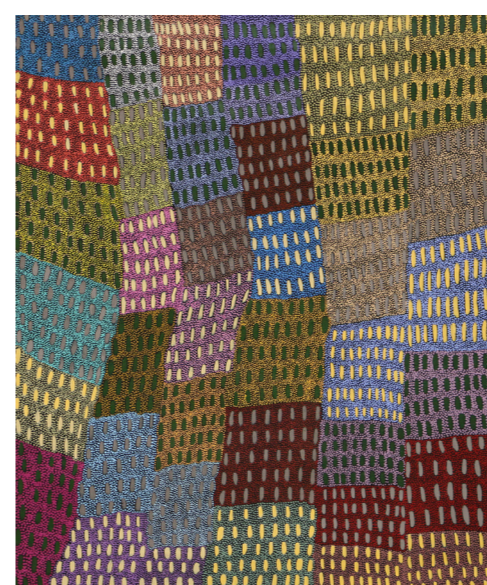
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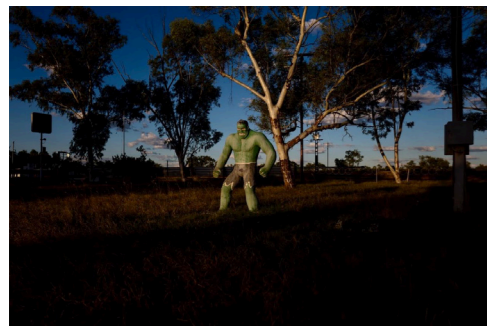
10.



11.



12.



13.

List of Works

- 01. Susannah Nelson
Man and Car, 2021
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30cm
- 02. Vicky Pope
Lightening Country, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61cm
- 03. Jesse Beasley
Bush Medicine, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 122 cm

- 04. Julie Beasley
Bush Medicine Seeds, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 91 cm
- 05. Jessie Peterson
Epenarra Landscape, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 61 x 91cm
- 06. Lindy Brodie
I Love Mum, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 41cm

- 07. Rita Beasley
Wutunugurra Landscape, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 91 cm
- 08. Susie Peterson
Landscape, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 107 x 76 cm
- 09. Kaye Beasley
Bendy Flowers, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 91 cm

- 10. Lorna Corbett
Grasses, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 91 cm
- 11. Aileen Long
Bush Tomatoes, 2023,
Acrylic on canvas, 61 x 91
- 12. Pammy Kemarr Foster
Out Bush, 2023
Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 107cm

- 13. Jesse Marlow
Wycliffe Well, 2023
Pure pigment print, 50 x 70cm
- Cover: Rita Beasley
Wutunugurra, 2022
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 122cm