

# Tjunguringanyi (Come Together)

3 May – 24 May 2025  
114 Commonwealth Street, Sydney

*Tjunguringanyi* presents three cultural custodians – a triumvirate of powerful storytellers profoundly linked not only through family and each other, but also to the foundation of Mimili Maku Arts and their place within the Mimili art movement. Locating yourself in this place takes a moment of standing in front of the work of each of these artists. Mimili is a remote community, at the base of the Everard Ranges in the centre of this continent and home to Tuppy Ngintja Goodwin, Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, and Robert Fielding.

When you sit down with these artists, conversation is driven by a deep commitment to cultural continuity – a unified purpose that radiates through their work as artists, leaders, and founding members of Mimili Maku Arts. These are contemporary artists ignited by political advocacy and community strength – a potent force for storytelling that honours the generous invitation from Kunmanara Mumu Mike Williams: *Kulilaya Munuya Nintiriwa Palya?* Listen to us, and learn from us, Australia, okay?

Mimili Maku Arts is the cultural, creative, and social heart of its community on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in remote north-west South Australia. In Anangu culture, things are not done alone. People live and work tjungu (together). The work in *Tjunguringanyi* celebrates this togetherness between Fielding, Pumani, and Goodwin, while also highlighting each artist's distinct visual language, honed over decades of innovation.

Each artist came to Mimili from different places. Fielding was born in Port Augusta and returned to Mimili in 1998. Pumani was born on her family's homeland of Antara, moving to Mimili as a young woman. Goodwin was born near Bambali Creek and arrived in Mimili—then Everard Station—at age six. This convergence shapes their collective evolution over two decades of working side by side. As Tuppy says, "We all worked tjungu together from a long time ago, and we are still working together now."

Tuppy Goodwin, Chairperson of Mimili Maku Arts, has been instrumental in its development since the early days. For her, this leadership was a natural extension of her work in community as a teacher. "*Nganana Tjukurpa nyanga paluru tjananya kanyira, nganana kunpu ngaranya*. When we look after our own stories, our cultural obligations, we are strong." Both Goodwin and Pumani paint Antara, a sacred Anangu site and home of the maku (witchetty grub) tjukurpa.

Goodwin's practice continues to evolve. Antara remains central, but her style has become increasingly bold—her gestures confident, her palette immersive. "I paint the *kapi tjukurla* (water rockholes). I mix colours to show that importance. *Kapi* connects us, connects our *Tjukurpa* sites, reminds us that everything is equally nourishing and destructive. It's a balance, *napartji-napartji*."

Pumani expresses Antara in her own distinct way. Every mark on the canvas contributes to an ongoing retelling. Her paintings are bold in scale and intent. "My mother would always tell me: You can paint this story - this story is vital and true. I am very proud of the maku story and of keeping our grandmother's and grandfather's story strong."

Robert Fielding is a descendant of the first Afghan cameleers, and of Yankunytjatjara and Western Arrernte heritage. As a son of the Stolen Generation, Fielding's work draws from a legacy of loss and recovery. Through research and deep curiosity, he reclaims his stolen history. His studio at Mimili Maku is ever-shifting - ideas move between printmaking, glass, metal, and photography. In *Tjunguringanyi*, Fielding offers the quietly powerful Milkali Kutju (*one blood*), a work embossed with ink, ochre, and emu fat. "This is my DNA," he says. "It's about Anangu and Piranpa. It's about us as individuals and as people who hold and work together."

The artists in *Tjunguringanyi* are inseparable from their ongoing work at Mimili Maku Arts and within their community. In the centre's cultural archive, the words of Mr Williams endure: "I am hoping to start a movement of new awareness."

This dynamism, this energy for both preservation and change - this movement will continue to grow with momentum under the stewardship of Tuppy Goodwin, Betty Pumani, and Robert Fielding.

Written by Gerry Bobsien

Dr Gerry Bobsien is the Director of Maitland Regional Art Gallery. Over the past two years, Maitland has embarked on an exchange and partnership program with Mimili Maku Arts including a significant solo exhibition Robert Fielding: *Tjukurpa handle it*. Recent Curatorial projects include *Crownland: Karla Dickens, Vincent Namatjira, Ben Quilty, Andrew Quilty, Megan Cope & Jake Chapman*.

This piece was written in the Mimili community on Yankunytjatjara Country with support from the Gordon Darling Foundation.