

# Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri Mural

Designed by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri

Mural by Bob Kessing and colleagues



## Yuelumu, Nyinyalingi, Yulutjirrka, Tjipiti and Ngalu

Acrylic on Masonry

Originally painted in 1985 Restored in 2008

This mural is based on an original painting of the same title by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, commissioned for the Araluen Cultural Trust in 1984 by Papunya Tula Artists Pty Ltd, and now part of the Araluen Art Collection.

The story relates to six important ancestral sites of the artist. Information about the mural is located on a sign adjacent to the mural on the east wall of the Araluen Arts Centre.

Under the artist's supervision, the mural was first painted in 1985 by Bob and Kaye Kessing with assistance from students at Yirara College and friends, and the financial support of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

The mural was completely restored in 2008 by Bob and Kaye Kessing, Pauline Clack, Henry Schreiner, Julie Burdis and Geoffrey Robinson. Lionel Possum Tjungarrayi, son of Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, contributed as cultural adviser and storyteller.

The restoration was made possible with support to the Friends of Araluen from the Northern Territory Public Art Program.

The restoration of the mural was officially launched by the Northern Territory, Minister for Arts and Museums, the Honourable Marion Scrymgour, as part of NAIDOC week celebrations on June 25, 2008



Northern Territory Government

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri  
Born c 1932 Napperby Station NT. Died 2002  
Anmatyerre

“Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri was born in a creek bed about 200 kilometres north-west of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). He spent his childhood in the company of his extended family, living off their country on the western side of Napperby station, in the manner of their ancestors. He received no formal education and had started his working life as a station hand by the time he was initiated into Anmatyerre manhood. In the early 1950s he turned down Albert Namatjira’s offer to teach him to paint European-style watercolours of the Central Australian landscape. He preferred wood carving, which he had begun in his late teens. He refined his skill while continuing to work as a stockman until the early 1970s.

Then came Papunya painting, one of the most extraordinary contemporary art movements, of which he was both a precursor and a pioneer. From his first painting for school teacher Geoffrey Bardon, Tjapaltjarri made a dramatic breakthrough to a new artistic medium. Throwing off the traces of European realism, he drew on the visual language of his own culture. Within a year and a half of beginning to paint on flat surfaces he had distinguished himself as one of Papunya Tula’s most original and innovative artists. Over three decades of continuous productivity, he remained a central figure and leading proponent of the painting style he helped to invent.

The recognition that the acrylic painters of the Western Desert were both the custodians of an ancient culture and contemporary artists of international stature was hard-won. It was built on the outstanding achievements of individuals like Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. With his first solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London in 1988, he became the first Australian Aboriginal artist to be feted in international art circles. In the last frenetic decade of his life, the artist bravely embraced the role of an independent ambassador for his art and culture. He became the most widely known and travelled Aboriginal artist of his generation”.

Dr. Vivien Johnson

