

FORT GANSEVOORT

LAMPOON

Iwantja Rock n Roll The work of three artists from
Aboriginal Australian communities

By Ario Mezzolani – July 29, 2022



Kaylene Whiskey, Kungkas in Hollywood, 2021, Acrylic on linen, 65.75 x 78 inches. ©Kaylene Whiskey. Courtesy of the artist and Fort Gansevoort.

Vincent Namatjira, Kaylene Whiskey, Tiger Yaltangki: Aboriginal Australian communities to produce commentary yielding humor, irony, depth, and re-contextualization

Lampoon presents Iwantja Rock n Roll

New York City's Fort Gansevoort art gallery hosts the collective exhibition Iwantja Rock n Roll by Vincent Namatjira, Kaylene Whiskey, and Tiger Yaltangki, renowned artists from Australia and members of the indigenous Indulkana Community.

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Their community is situated in the northwestern region of South Australia on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands. This is the artists' first time appearing as a collective exhibit in New York City, Namatjira shares, «*When the opportunity came up to have an exhibition in New York City we thought 'hey, what about we have a show together? Kaylene, Tiger, and myself – we've never done that before'».*

'Iwantja Rock n Roll' denotation

All three artists, Namatjira, Whiskey, and Yaltangki are from an Aboriginal community, Indulkana, which is also known as Iwantja after the Iwantja Creek, where the community was first established. Indulkana/Iwantja is one of six main communities on the APY Lands.

The artists are a part of the Iwantja Arts center, one of eleven indigenous-owned and governed enterprises of the APY Art Center Collective which was established in 2013. Iwantja Arts supports the artistic practices of over forty members across varying mediums, some of which are represented in the exhibit including painting and video making.

The common thread found throughout the artists' work is a commentary that takes western cultural icons out of their context and depicts them in APY lands or Anangu lifestyle, thus giving way to thought-provoking irony and humor.

This connection is represented in the exhibit's title, Iwantja Rock n Roll, as explained by Namatjira, «*All our work is very different, but there are connections there – we all love music, especially rock n roll, so that's where the title came from*».

Emerging contemporary artists from Indulkana

The artists are a part of a contemporary art movement from remote Indigenous communities across their nation, «*Younger artists like me, Kaylene, and Tiger are making work that we want to share with people all over the world. We make contemporary art – it's maybe not exactly what people think of when they think about Aboriginal art from Australia, like dot painting and more traditional work. We're like the new generation that is moving things forward. We respect the traditions, we're still influenced by the old people and their strong culture but we make art that is also influenced by what is happening globally with other art, music, and movies*», states Namatjira. Whiskey and Yaltangki both grew up and went to school in Indulkana.

Namatjira met the two artists when he moved to Indulkana with his partner over ten years ago and went to the Iwantja Arts center. He shares, «*We're some of the younger artists at Iwantja Arts – we've got a lot of respect for the old people who make more traditional paintings and we're influenced by them and their work but we make our own style of work that is bold and contemporary*».