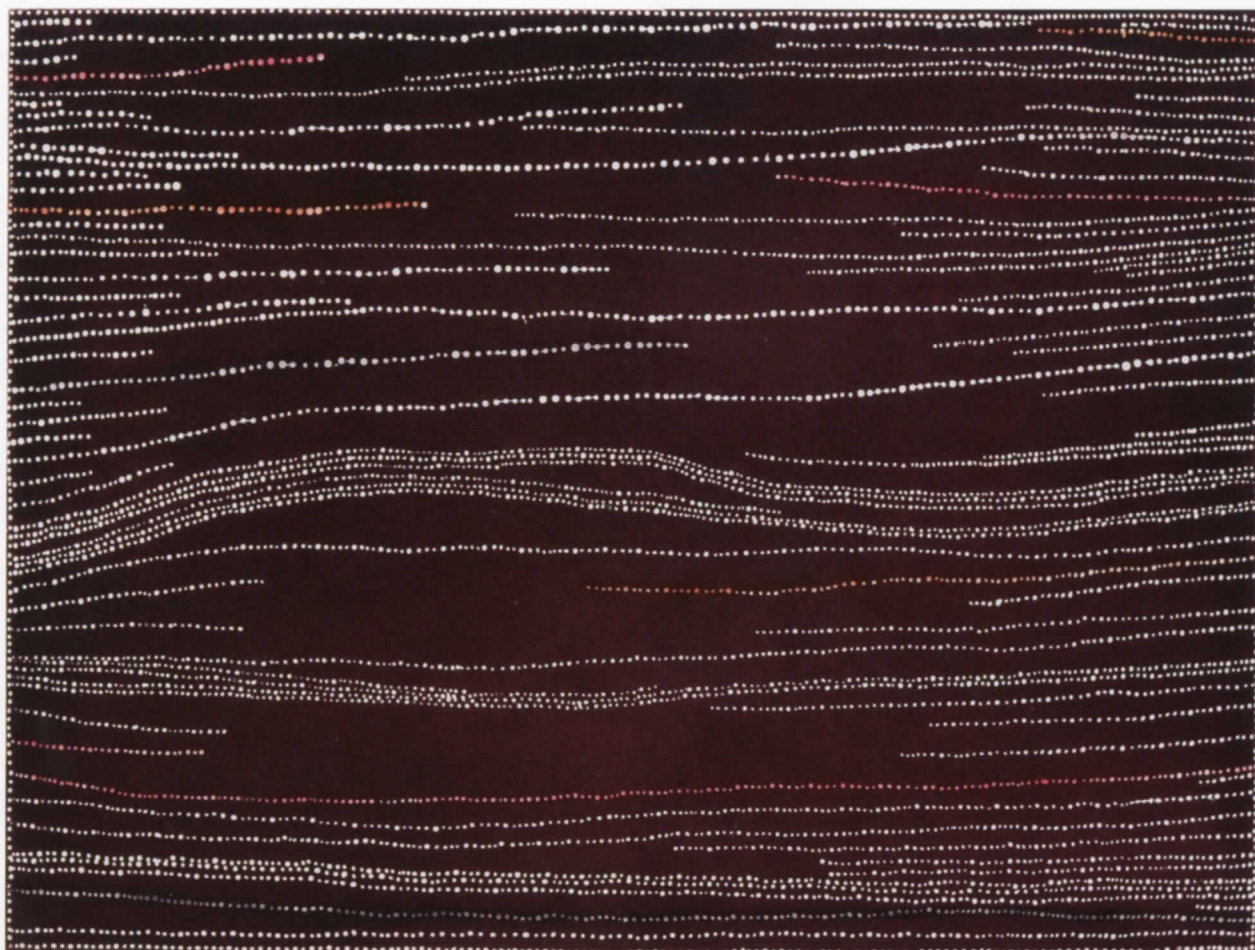


# Overview



Dorothy Napangardi, *Sandhills*, 2004. Color soap ground, spit bite, and sugar lift aquatints. Paper size: 25-1/2 x 30-3/4"; image size: 17-3/4 x 23-3/4". Edition 50.

## Making Prints with Dorothy Napangardi An Australian Adventure from a diary by Dena Schuckit

*In the summer of 2004, Dena Schuckit, Crown Point's senior master printer, traveled to Australia to work with Aboriginal artist Dorothy Napangardi. The text of this Overview was written by her during the three weeks she spent in Australia. Years ago, when Crown Point Press took artists to Japan and China to do projects, I came to understand that the mother of invention is not necessity; it is opportunity. Our project in Australia came about at the suggestion of Belinda Fox, printer and studio manager of Port Jackson Press Australia, who participated in a summer etching workshop at Crown Point in 2003. She introduced us to Napangardi's work, and put us in contact with Gallery Gondwana, the artist's gallery. Because the artist did not think*



Dorothy Napangardi drawing on the plate for the image *Sandhills*, National Art School, Sydney.





Dorothy Napangardi, *Karntakurlangu Jukurrpa 1 (Women's Dreaming 1)*, 2004. Color soap ground and sugar lift aquatints. Paper size: 31 x 24-3/4"; image size: 23-3/4 x 17-3/4". Edition 50.

*she could make art away from her homeland, Fox and Lotte Waters of Gallery Gondwana did the planning needed to bring the project to fruition in Australia. We sent Dena Schuckit there, and she and Belinda Fox worked with Napangardi to make and proof the plates in the etching studio of the National Art School, Sydney. The prints were editioned in San Francisco.*

—Kathan Brown

### Melbourne, my first day, the 8th of August, 2004

Belinda picks me up at the airport on my arrival at 8 a.m. After a much-needed shower we head out to Federation Square, a newly renovated and quite modern block of museums and restaurants. It's where the National Gallery of Victoria sits, and we take advantage of that to check out their indigenous arts section. There's a wide variety of work here, most of it fairly new, and I can really see how much the work of one Aboriginal community differs from another. The stories, palette, pattern, and iconography are incredibly diverse. Even within one community, there are icons that are owned by one family, passed down from generation to generation, and another family, even within that same community, cannot incorporate them into their work. And apparently the dozens of languages spoken by these groups can be as different from one another as French and German. There is also some work here that I would not

necessarily have identified as Aboriginal, stuff from young artists taking their painting tradition to a more expressive level. Some of this work is quite gaudy. We're rushed here, as we have a lunch date at the Chocolate Buddha, a Japanese restaurant on Federation Square, with part of the gang from Port Jackson Press. This is a great chance for me to meet Belinda's team in an informal environment, and do it while sitting out in the sunshine with a glass of Australian cabernet (Shawwood, great!) in order to begin the acclimatization process to this new time zone. We spend the rest of the day chatting. Lovely afternoon, a really nice group. I'm a bit giddy.

### 8/9, Melbourne to Darwin

Belinda pops her little green-tipped head into the room and wakes me at 9:30; somehow I've slept 12 hours. I give a talk at Port Jackson Press about Crown Point Press, which goes fine, I think. The group fills the space and is composed of a cross section of the printmaking community including teachers from the university, printmakers, printers, art critics, and the curator of prints and drawings (Alisa Bunbury) from the National Gallery of Victoria. All are fans of Crown Point. They are curious about how we're trained, how the business works, our relationship as printers to the process of making the prints.

After the talk, Belinda and I visit the Australian Print Workshop, a nonprofit printshop, where we get a tour from the director, Anne Virgo. They do some great work with Aboriginal artists. We run some errands, drive home and pack, and then dash back to the airport (I was just there yesterday on my arrival in Australia) for an 8:40 p.m. plane to Darwin, where we land at around 12:30 at night. I'm staying at a hotel with Lotte Waters of Gallery Gondwana, and I get the impression that I am lucky to be staying anywhere at all what with the droves of tourists in town for the annual Telstra Aboriginal Art Awards. Belinda stays with a friend in town.

### 8/10, Darwin

Darwin is hot and muggy, barely a city at all—it's more like a village or a large coastal suburb. The beach is broad and inviting, the ocean a turquoise siren—if the jelly fish don't get you,



Artists working on etching plates, Northern Editions Printmaking Workshop, Darwin. Greg Mallyon, Business Manager of Northern Editions, looks on.



then the crocs will. There are monumental frangipani trees that surely must be at least a century old. There is a mini-dinosaur who hangs out by the pool here. He's a two-and-a-half foot lizard standing six inches high, a handsome devil.

This morning, a Tuesday, we all have some breakfast together in town and then drive to Charles Darwin University where Northern Editions is located. The school really feels like it's out in the boondocks—people joke about Darwin being the last frontier.

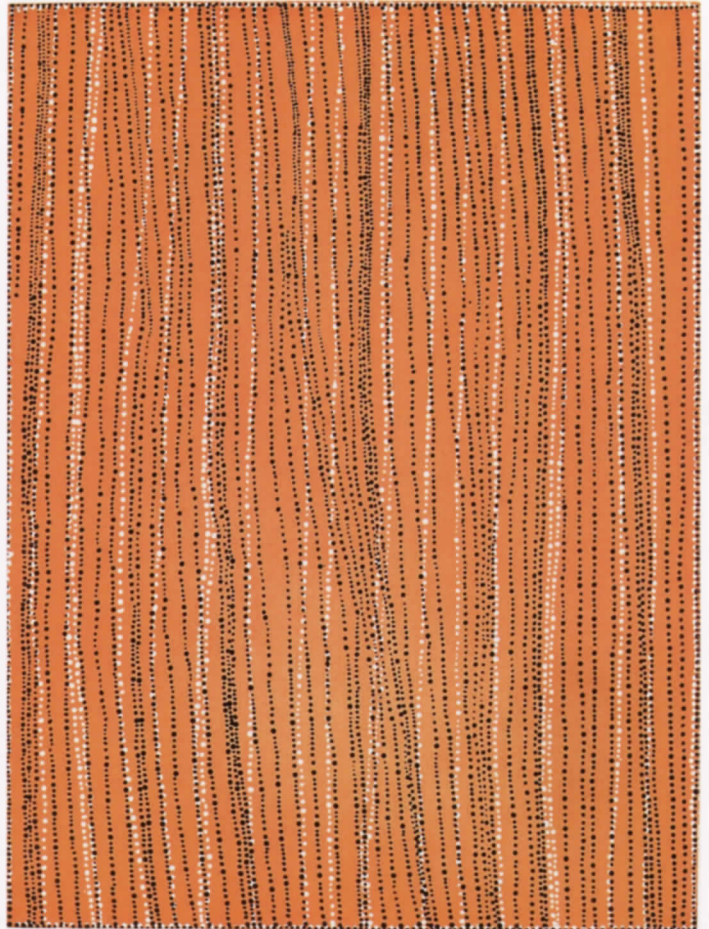
Northern Editions is a unique place, funded partly by the university, partly by the government. The printers have very little contact with the university students here. They actually load a press and acid and plates and inks into trucks and maneuver the whole shebang over unpaved and rutted roads into remote indigenous communities where they make prints. They then edition the plates back at Northern Editions. For some projects, they bring a group of artists back with them to Darwin to work on the plates. This afternoon, there is a large tarp and some blankets spread out on the ground outside under a vast tree, and six older Aboriginal women are working on plates right on the ground there. They look at home sitting on the earth like that. They're watched over and assisted by a couple of Northern Editions printers including a young indigenous woman with the most unabashedly open smile I've ever seen on an adult. In the gallery there is a portfolio of work from the Warmun community that I fall in love with. Art from this region tends to be composed of large, broad shapes worked in warm and earthy pinks and purples. Big lakes and huge hills. I can't believe I just arrived the day before yesterday.

## 8/11, Darwin, Tiwi Islands

Huge, exciting day. The Darwin airport is merely a mobile home set on a large, paved lot scattered with tiny aircraft. We travel in one of those, headed out to the art centers in the Tiwi Islands, so called after the indigenous population there, although officially these little blips off the coast of Darwin are named Bathurst Island and Melville Island. We have special permits to visit the art centers of four separate communities today.



Tiwi artist painting in The Keeping House, Ngaruwanajirri Art Center, Nguuu, Bathurst Island.



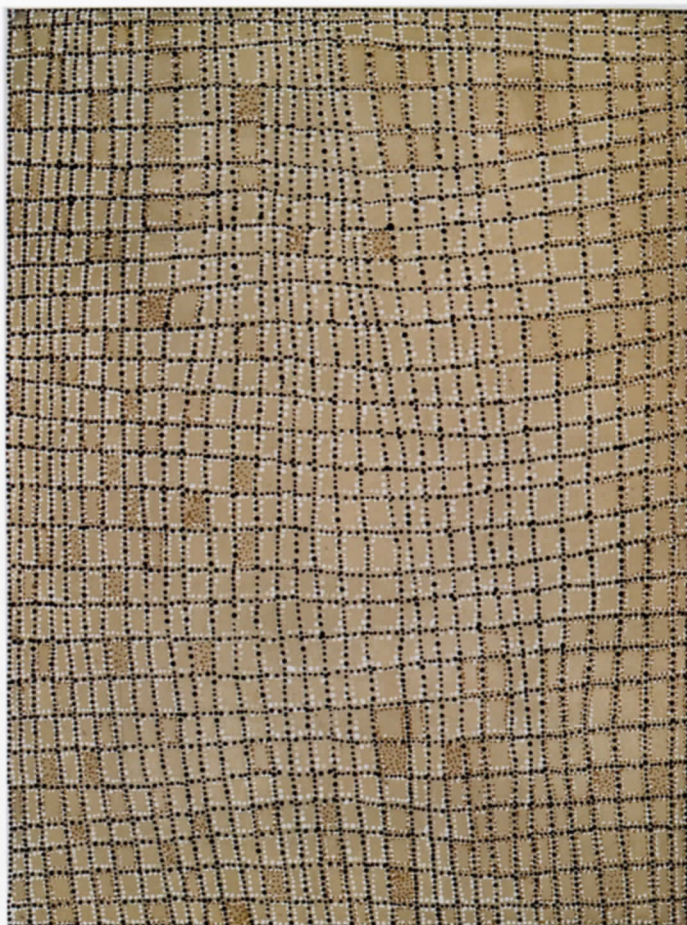
Dorothy Napangardi, *Kana-kurlangu Jukurrpa (Digging Stick Dreaming)*, 2004. Color aquatint with sugar lift aquatint. Paper size: 31 x 24-3/4"; image size: 23-3/4 x 17-3/4". Edition 50.

The first, which we reach with a guide by four-wheel drive, has a vaulted ceiling covered with amazing artwork, a cement floor, and little else. There are barely walls, and we nickname this place the Sistine Chapel. A few artists are scattered about, immersed in their painting; they smile when we greet them. Next we head off in the truck to a much larger center and we're greeted enthusiastically by artists who are very generous about showing us what they are working on. There's incredible ceramic sculpture happening here, freestanding cars filled with picnickers or hunters and whimsical interpretations of the artists' creation story, a tale like the best of them, full of adultery, revenge, and murder.

A woman is busy grating a yellow chunk of clay/rock in order to use it for her painting (she'll mix it with glue or acrylic medium) and a guy out back is squatting over a small fire cooking up some red ochre mixed with some other medium. Everything is dirty and dusty and there's little distinction between outdoors and in. Loose dogs wander everywhere hungry for grub or attention; tiny puppies are in a drain pipe. Cinder block houses, poverty, naked children.

Short flight to Melville Island. At the first art center we visit, the focus is highly patterned painting along with funeral





Dorothy Napangardi, *Karntakurlangu Jukurrpa 2 (Women's Dreaming 2)*, 2004. Color soap ground and sugar lift aquatints. Paper size: 31 x 24-3/4"; image size: 23-3/4 x 17-3/4". Edition 50.

poles and wooden sculpture of long, elegant birds. Glen Farmer, our guide, is petite and wiry and bursting with information and energy. We are introduced to three men, brothers of Glen, each working on his own piece. I sit down with the eldest of the brothers, a rugged, bearded fellow about 65 in a large and floppy hat who is intently crosshatching in yellow ochre. He's curious about whether it's scary living in the United States what with all the terrorism. He wants to know if it is scary right now to be traveling around the world as an American. He worries about terrorists infiltrating Sydney—"sleeper cells." All this coming from a man out in the middle of nowhere, truly. Glen, we discovered, is similarly plugged in—during the course of a picnic on the beach, he rattles off a whole series of names of people both he and Belinda know in the printmaking world of Melbourne and Sydney.

We think we are on the way back to the airport with one of Glen's brothers behind the wheel, but we find they have actually asked the elder of their family for permission and we are on the way to their family burial site. This is a place in the middle of the bush, among palms, that is scattered with about 40 carved *pukumani* poles, some fresh and ornately painted and others beginning to fade back into the environment. It feels like a holy place (I feel honored to see this spot). Every

deceased from this community gets one pole, but could have many poles created in their honor depending on social standing. The poles, which are painted in patterns traditional to the particular family, are planted at a ceremony of dancing and crying about a year after the burial. Areas where the deceased spent a lot of time, and the place in which he or she died, are smoked



*Pukumani* poles at a burial site, Milikapiti, Melville Island.

to rid them of the spirit of the dead person.

At our second art center on Melville Island I can see how different communities, people living not far from one another, create very different work. The work here is painted in bright colors and bold patterns, acid yellows and turquoise blues. There is also some very careful and subtle pottery happening at this center.

On our way back to Darwin, we fly over snaking rivers, ribbons of water reflecting white through square plots of red and ochre land, yellow and green foliage. I see the patterns and colors I've been seeing throughout the day in the work at the various art centers. We rush home and clean up for an opening at Government House for a suite of prints by Northern Editions Press. It is a formal affair held outside in an incredible garden with setting sun and huge flying fowl, with several of the artists present. At dinner I eat kangaroo. I'm reeling from all I've seen today. I'm excited to be here, and feeling optimistic and positive about the upcoming project. I've learned a great deal already, which is to say I've realised how little I actually know about these indigenous people. Their world seems more abstract and complicated than anything I've encountered before and it would take some serious years of study to get a grasp on their culture. I am basically working on erasing any assumptions and preconceptions I have had, and I am starting fresh.

## 8/12, Darwin, Arnhem Land

We head out early this morning in a rented four-wheel drive towards Arnhem Land on the other side of Kakadu. Arnhem Land is a huge area of Aboriginal country (again, we have a permit to go here) within which lies our destination, the art center at Oenpelli. The drive out takes three or four hours. It's arid, lots of deserty palms and eucalyptus and grey brush. We pass vast graveyards where the tombstones turn out to actually be termite nests man-high. Our route passes over rivers—we see crocodiles drifting. Cockatoos fly in huge, raucous flocks and



chat up a storm in the trees they take over. Australians view them as pests but I'm completely awed by them. A tree full of wild cockatoos! Our gateway into the restricted land is basically a little river that one can only cross if the level is low enough; we've timed our arrival to coincide with this ebb of the river. The river is patrolled by a huge crocodile, so we can only hope the vehicle doesn't putz out in the middle of the crossing. The few miles of dirt road leading to Oenpelli run along some gorgeous wetland paved with water lily and inhabited by exotic bird life.

As we pull into town, we pass on the road an ancient woman trudging home toting a four-foot goanna she's just killed. We roll down our window to complement her on the catch, and she hoists the beast up for us to see. This lizard looks nearly as large as the woman. The art center is air-conditioned and has some cabins and a guesthouse on stilts. The director offers an apt comparison to the way I'm feeling as he speaks about the learning curve he experienced on getting his job. He says it's as if on his arrival he was presented with a gift certificate for a twenty-volume encyclopedia of Aboriginal culture. The first week, Chapter Five of Volume Eight arrived in the mail. Next he received Chapter Thirty of Volume Three, and so on. He's still working on piecing all these bits together. There is so much to absorb, and I'm not sure whether my mind is spinning or if it's just blown.

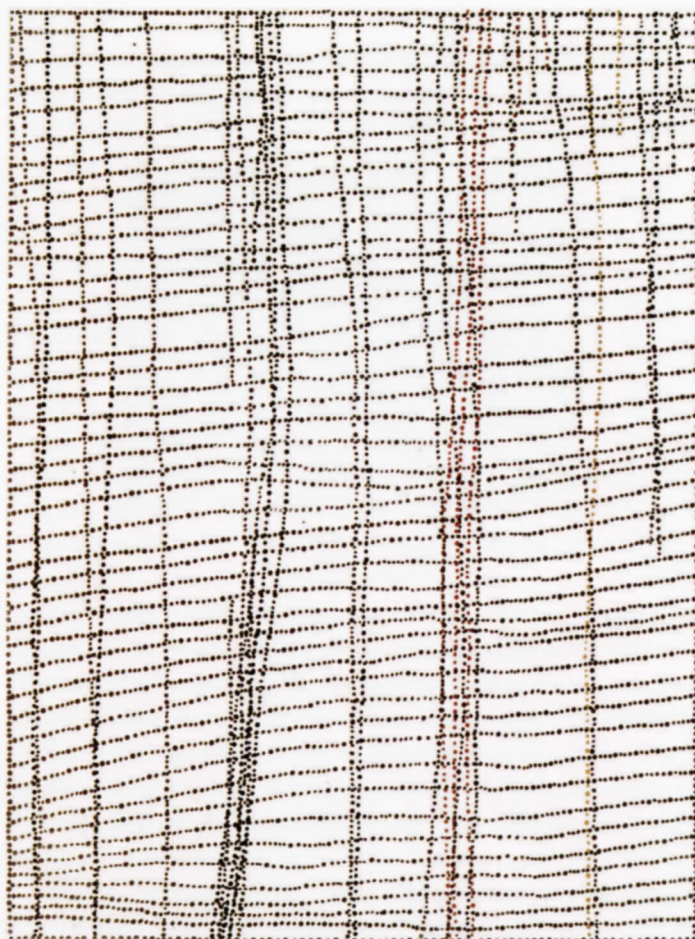
We drive out onto the wetland and watch the pelicans, egrets, herons, and kytes fish for supper and are awed by the wild horses beyond and the red hills rising in the distance. Horses whinny and flying foxes hit the air. I realize that the two dogs wrestling in the marsh below are actually just one dog; he's dragging a huge boar's head nearly his size off for some privacy.



Wetlands, Oenpelli, Arnhem Land.

Fruit bats take wing, darting around the tamarind tree.

While dinner is cooking, Lotte and I discuss some questions I have about Aboriginal wealth. I'm trying to get a grasp on what looks like a difficult life without projecting my values on this foreign culture. I remember that a Tiwi artist we met, the one who did the ceramic cars, is well-known and his work is collected by major galleries and museums, but he is living in poor conditions and wearing tattered clothes. Lotte talks about a real sense of community, the responsibility of sharing. A lack



Dorothy Napangardi, *Mina Mina Country*, 2004. Color sugar lift aquatint. Paper size: 31 x 24-3/4"; image size: 23-3/4 x 17-3/4". Edition 50.

of drive to accumulate. Family duty. She tells me that this year when Sotheby's sold a painting of Dorothy's for more than a hundred thousand dollars, it was a disaster in Dorothy's life as no one could fathom that she didn't make a cent from the sale and all expected to share the money. What's mine is yours among family members.

I ask what would be the Aboriginal definition of wealth and she comes up with something like "good bush tucker and a motorcar—goanna, magpie goose, and a Toyota with 4wd." Within this culture, there is not a drive for fame and fortune, there's not the ambition to social climb or live large. Artists have their family iconography and the art-making traditions are passed down. Art is often created together, in groups, within the community setting, elders teaching youngsters the way their story is told. Lotte says that Dorothy does not talk a whole lot about her work—it just is. At the same time, she says, Dorothy has somewhat broken away from her visual family tradition, dropped out the iconography, and evolved her images. Anyway, we leave the gas tank of our rented car open so that kids don't damage it breaking in to steal petrol to huff.



### 8/13, Arnhem Land, Darwin

Up early for a rock art tour. Our guide, regal and eloquent, is Wilfred Nawirrioj. We hike up, stopping every so often to catch our breath and enjoy the vista. Wilfred says this is not a spiritual



Rock painting of the Creation Mother near Injalak Arts and Crafts, Oenpelli, Arnhem Land.

site, not where ceremonies happened. He shows us trees whose leaves are good to use as spice to cook meat in a bush oven, and a reed good to strip down and use as a fine paintbrush. The rock paintings are amazing and sure seem spiritual to me. Wilfred says that the only question we can't ask him is "how old," as he doesn't know. Some of the sketches seem to be instructional drawings such as how to cut up a fish or construct a dilly (reed) bag or lantern. Others are creation stories. There is one of the creation mother, a figure carrying many bags containing babies of different languages which she sprinkled across the land in the first days. There is the legend of the turtle and the porcupine, a gruesome one involving baby-eating and battle. There are images of the lightning spirit with his ax-wielding knees that can strike down a man or ring out thunderously.

We arrive at a burial site and are asked to put our cameras away. In the past, the dead of this community were bundled in leaves and placed in caves or in trees here, and the family of the deceased would stay for days or weeks performing ceremonies. To this day, there are bones evident between rocks in the dirt.

Back to Darwin for the Telstra Aboriginal Art Awards Ceremony. Thousands of people are seated on a lawn in front of a large stage. The brother of our guide in the Tiwi Islands, the one who took us to the burial site of his family, is here as a dancer. When the big prize, \$40,000, is presented, the dancers from his Tiwi Islands community dance up onto the stage in tribal gear with a dilly bag full of money to present to the winner. Dorothy Napangardi won this award in 2001.

### 8/15, Darwin, Sydney

Wind-down day. Visit to Basil Hall Editions, which is located on the ground floor of the printer's house. I didn't realize it until we meet, but Basil Hall took our Crown Point workshop nine years ago! He pulls out a picture of a large-haired me from 1995, my first summer at Crown Point, my first workshop. Basil, like Northern Editions, often works out

in the bush. Belinda and I spend a quiet afternoon reading, and go to the wharf with friends at sunset for a beer and fish-and-chips (barramundi). Our flight is at 1:30 a.m. with a 6 a.m. arrival in Sydney.

### 8/16, Sydney

We're goofy today. Six a.m. cab to Lotte's place, coffee and breakfast. Clear bay view, indigenous art on the walls. Around ten, Belinda and I check into our place, an amazing apartment on the fifth floor with a view! I don't know how Lotte found this place—very comfortable and stylish.

Next, off to the National Art School to set up, settle in. The school itself is a huge, stone number circa 1880. It used to be a prison (built by the inmates) and has underground passageways, with gallows just adjacent to the printmaking studios. Contrary to its history, it's a beautiful place. There is a big print shop spread throughout two buildings. Simon Cooper, head of printmaking, is amazingly generous in the space he's lending us. He's set aside a room for Dorothy to work in above the studio with windows looking both outside (good light) and into the print shop. We have our own set of keys for the studio, and our private room locks as well. There's a good press (bakelite bed, big wheel, perfect size for 30 x 44 paper) in the print shop that we can set up with our blankets, registration system, etc. It won't be used by students during these couple of weeks, which means a third of their presses will be out of commission for them. Hand-crank aquatint box with a hand-melting system using a gas burner.

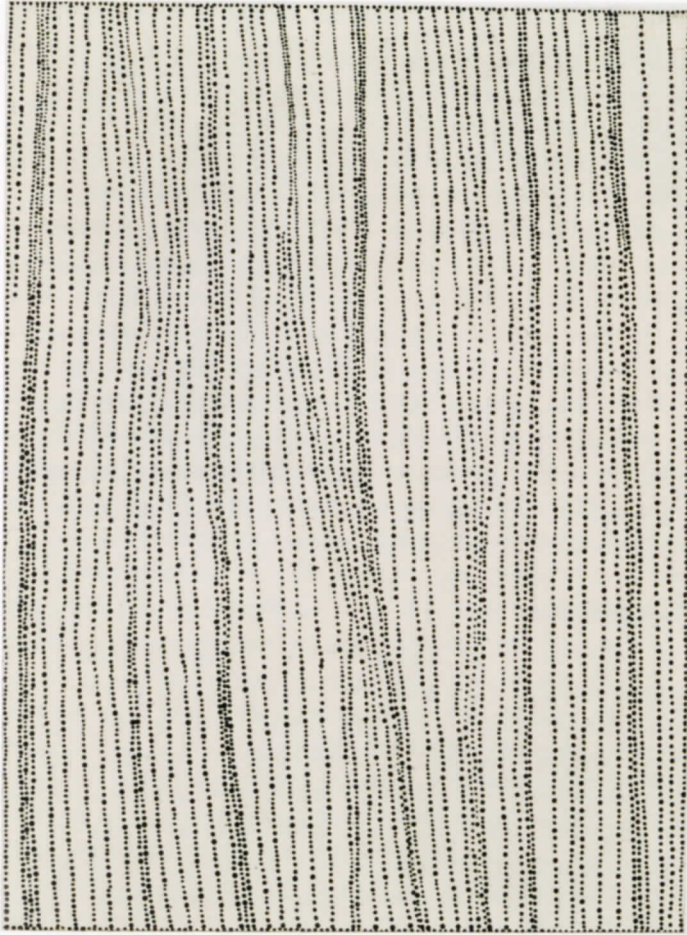
I am a bit skeptical of the pre-powdered rosin, which is brickly in color and looks like it's ground from some material other than the rosin I'm used to, and we'll be etching everything in Ferric, which doesn't require special ventilation. But this is part of the project, being resourceful in a new situation, and we have tomorrow to work everything out with test plates. It's good for me, this challenge. If Basil Hall and the printers from Northern Editions can drag a press and materials out into the bush to make good prints, then certainly Belinda and I can make a success here in this well-equipped space.

Next we head to Gallery Gondwana where we check out Dorothy's numerous canvasses stored there in preparation for a show going up in the next couple of weeks. It's great to see



Dorothy's hand dotting soap ground on a copper plate.





Dorothy Napagardi, *Salt on Mina Mina*, 2004. Sugar lift aquatint with *gampi* paper chine collé. Paper size: 31 x 24-3/4"; image size: 23-3/4 x 17-3/4". Edition 50.

them in real life and in such quantity. They are phenomenally beautiful (this is a great artist). It's both helpful and wonderful to see the variety. The black dot on white is particularly striking; my mind is spinning thinking about our possibilities this week. There are stacks of paintings by Dorothy's daughter Julie as well; she's a chip off the old block. Julie's work has larger dots, and incorporates swaths of bright red and deep grey. She's apparently very successful as an artist in her own right.

By early evening we're done for the day. We catch up on sleep tonight, as Dorothy will arrive early in the studio.



Dotting another plate.

## 8/17, Tuesday

Dorothy arrives with Lotte and Tess Vairy, Lotte's assistant, a ray of sunshine. Dorothy is shy and hesitant; I can hardly catch her eye. Lotte and Tess do a whole routine of joking and ribbing in an attempt to loosen her up and get some reaction out of her. Belinda had told me she collects blankets; she seems to like the one I brought, but really loves a pendant made by a San Francisco artist that I also give her. It's very rewarding when I get a big smile from her. Dorothy shows Belinda and I several tall stacks of photos of her country that she's brought with her—photos of her daughters and grandchildren, her return in 1999 to her roots at Mina Mina; old aunties showing her traditional ceremonies and dances.

Lotte's come with blankets and cushions for Dorothy to work on, as she usually does her painting on the floor. We've set up heaters because it has been raining since the morning of our arrival in Sydney, a freezing, relentless downpour. After getting to know each other a bit, Lotte leaves (Tess remains with us for the day) and we start work on some tiny test plates. They not only allow us to begin learning how to communicate with this incredible nonverbal woman but allow her to get into the flow of printmaking by testing out various materials, finding the right sharpness of dotting stick (wooden skewers), the right size dots to use. As she draws each plate, the dots become finer.

We negotiate the aquatint set-up; Belinda gets the Ferric mixed and broken in. Once the test plates are etched, we have a chance to combine them in various ways and in several different colors within Dorothy's palette in order to have them on the wall to refer to during the course of the project. Dorothy seems pleased with everything that goes on the wall, and she attacks every test plate we hand her with a different medium. It's great having Tess here for her positive energy and the comforting function she serves for Dorothy. Belinda and I seem to have a nice rhythm, and we work late finishing up these small plates.

## 8/18, Wednesday

We arrive at 9 a.m. and prep some larger plates for Dorothy to begin work on today. It takes her most of the day to complete one plate in soap ground, and then Belinda and I nearly tear our hair out (our own, not each other's) at the strange marks that appear in the plate as it is etching. All the worry ends up, luckily, for naught as the etched plate looks just wonderful. Simon says that there is nearly four times the typical amount of chlorine in the Sydney water as a result of a recent Giardia outbreak. It is this extra chlorine that causes the scary "ghosts" as the plates etch.

## 8/19, Thursday

Dorothy and Tess arrive around 9, and Dorothy starts on a sugar lift plate. Belinda and I had agreed to do a program for





Dena Schuckit with Dorothy Napangardi at the National Art School, Sydney.

the students, and this is our big speech day in the auditorium. We invite Dorothy along but she opts not to come, preferring to keep dotting away on her image. We show and tell and get a lovely and positive response and intelligent questions. It's good to be doing this thing early on, so the students here understand what we're up to, hogging their space. We let them know that they should ask us any questions they might have throughout our presence here. I'm happy to see Belinda's presentation about Port Jackson.

When we get back to our room, we find that in her short amount of time on her own, Dorothy has nearly completed the whole plate. We'll feel comfortable giving her lots of space from now on. I feel like I cracked the shell a bit today. Dorothy and I have a conversation about her family, her daughters (she has five), her country, and languages. Again I confront the cultural differences, trying to deal with an artist who is, to a huge degree, cared for by Roslyn (owner of Gallery Gondwana), Lotte, and Tess. Her canvasses are prepped; she's provided with a working space; she doesn't have to worry about taking care of her money but she's got plenty of it to share with her family. Dorothy seems very content with her life.

### 8/20, Friday

Dorothy invites me to go hunting for perrenti (huge lizard) in Alice Springs, which I think is symbolic—I feel it is a real honor to be invited by Dorothy to go hunting. Sadly, I have to take a rain check on that. We pull a beautiful proof, black on a yellow background, which Dorothy immediately and without any hesitation absolutely loves. We get a firm, “Good. Nice color,” which for her is exceedingly communicative. I know she loves this proof.

She draws two more sugar lift plates. Lotte, this morning, has invited us for chicken at her house this evening, but if Dorothy is to see the fruits of her labor tomorrow, then I need to stay and etch tonight. Belinda is tired, and leaves at 6 for dinner at Lotte's. At 8:30, while I'm walking home, Lotte pulls up alongside me in her car and says that the chicken arrived late, why don't I come over for some.

### 8/21, Saturday

I really want to get these plates that I etched last night proofed and up on the wall, but this ends up taking three hours. It's after one o'clock when Dorothy sees the two new prints. She has been waiting all morning, and although I get the sense that she really does like what she sees, she decides that her fingers are sore and she won't make more plates this day, which I can completely understand as she's been dotting intently on these plates for days now. Lotte is concerned that Dorothy and Tess came to the school and no work was made today. I tell her that artists always have hours of waiting during etching projects at home, but the printers try to keep that to a minimum and the momentum going.

### 8/22, Sunday

We meet at our apartment this morning at 10, all three of us, Belinda, Lotte, and I, to talk about how things are going. We're struggling to find our individual places in this project. I need to feel in control of the platemaking as much as I can if we're going to get good plates up to Crown Point standards to bring back and edition. And I'm trying to build rapport with Dorothy and not bombard her with too many options, which is a sensitive operation. I need to learn how to communicate with her even though we haven't yet established a bond of familiarity. We clear a lot of this stuff up. We all know that the product here, some incredible art, is the ultimate goal, and we'll do whatever it takes to achieve this. Lotte is amazing at what she does and is beginning to understand about the pressure and organization of a two-week printmaking project. Belinda and I are collaborating with each other a great deal—we're talking about how to approach the next plates, which paintings of Dorothy's would be valuable to reference, what materials to use, what color choices to offer Dorothy. I'm depending on Belinda for the etching in Ferric and the hard ground we're using over the sugar lift; these are her materials. I wander Sydney today,



great relief, on my day off, and mull over our conversation this morning.

### 8/23, Monday

A new week. It's Belinda's 29th birthday and I want it to be a great day. Everything feels fresh and new, and the two of us feel excited about this second half of our time in Sydney. We have a nice breakfast at our spot across the street, and are picked up by Lotte at 8:30 for a ride into work. We've decided that it would be helpful for all involved if we meet in the mornings whenever we can in order to check in with each other. Tess and Dorothy arrive at the school with cake and a candle for Belinda. Dorothy is looking pretty today in a nice skirt—she's distracted because her boyfriend, Chris, is coming into town from Fiji for an undetermined period of time.

Despite the distraction, she makes a beautiful sugar lift plate in a grid pattern and we talk about putting a color soap ground plate behind it and maybe an additional sugar lift plate as well. It seems that the two first images are worked out now, so we pull OKTP's for them. The second and third images will be even stronger than these first two because we finally have the studio/aquatint box worked out. I'm beginning to get to know some of the students, which is fun. They're feeling comfortable enough with our presence now to ask us about the project, and some technical things—hand wiping, etc.

Dorothy is picked up by Lotte and Tess while Belinda and I keep on keeping on. We break at five to have a birthday beer down the road with Simon. (I'm amazed how accommodating and positive and easy-going and generous Simon has been with

us. He's going out of his way to ensure these couple of weeks at his school are fruitful for us.) We work until just after 8 and then get Indian food. This has been a good day on many levels. These prints will really be something.

### 8/24, Tuesday

We are hitting a positively beautiful stride this second and final working week. We're all comfortable creating together, having worked out the kinks, and it's fun. The weather is sunny and warm. We grab lunches from the cafeteria, our way navigated by Dorothy who has an acute sense of direction and place, and eat outside. Dorothy dots confidently away up in our private room while we process plates and proof. She feels safe and happy here now, so Tess can get back to her job at the gallery.

Dorothy has been excitedly anticipating the arrival of her boy-friend, Chris, from Fiji. Eating lunch in the yard on Monday, she stuck out her pointer finger and swiveled her torso to demonstrate the direction of Fiji. The Gallery Gondwana folks wanted me to be aware of the possibility that Chris's arrival could mean serious distraction or even days off for Dorothy, and I was concerned that our working time would be cut short. However, Dorothy is taking this project incredibly seriously and everything is working out for all involved.

Chris has arrived, along with Roslyn Premont, the founder and owner of Gallery Gondwana, who went to Fiji to fetch him and Rusiate, Roslyn's husband, who happens to be the nephew of Chris. They are all at the school this morning to see what we have been up to. Roslyn is magnificent and powerful, and it seems appropriate that her husband, Rusiate, is a Fijian chief.



Lotte Waters, Belinda Fox, Dorothy Napangardi and Tess Vairy at the National Art School, Sydney.



He is a charismatic man—an artist and musician and a tremendous fan of Dorothy's work. He is working on a video about her history and her work and has brought a video camera with him in order to film what's going on here.

Chris is extremely quiet, but does he ever bring a grin to Dorothy's face! She's all dressed up today and is wearing the pendant I brought for her (which makes me happy). Rusiate's sharp—he walks in, scans us all from head to toe along with what we're working on, keys right in, and asks just the right questions. He films us inking and proofing. We talk about how dedicated and intent Dorothy's working style is. I wonder where she goes in the process, what she thinks about.

Dorothy's visitors leave late morning, and she spends the entire day working on one soap ground plate. It's detailed and fine, and I feel like this plate is the grand finale, the culmination of everything she's picked up thus far. Roslyn comes back at around four to collect Dorothy, and it's obvious that her presence is a huge help to all involved. She and Dorothy have had a relationship for about eighteen years; they are very close friends. Her return to town means that Dorothy can go home now—she lives and works in Ros's house and has been staying with Tess in her absence. Ros has a deep understanding of Dorothy's work, and is very helpful to us. When she arrives, we have just pulled good proofs of a few of the images, and she gives us some insight into their content. Sandhills, women dancing, trees. We pull a beautiful proof today of the black sugar lift plate printed on *gampi* chine collé. Belinda and I are feeling very happy and relieved. We know we're in the home stretch.

### 8/25, Wednesday

We proof the soap ground plate in a grey/brown mix: it's spectacular in its range. Printed, it's positively khaki-brown, a



Dena and Dorothy at the press.

surprise but quite beautiful. It's complemented by a black sugar lift grid, and today Dorothy is working on an additional sugar lift plate that will be printed in a third color. I sit with Dorothy for a while today while she works. I ask her if she loves to paint, and she says she does but also speaks a bit about all the responsibility she feels to take care of her family. She's curious about the price of a print compared to that of a painting. She talks about earning in terms of cars that she can provide for relatives.

### 8/26, Thursday

We are finishing a productive final week of the project, printing breathtaking OKTP'S! We do a lot of proofing today experimenting with color, observed by Rusiate's camera. Dorothy's final soap ground plate gives us two very individual proofs that work gorgeously together. At two we have a "tea" with the Gallery Gondwana people, Simon and other professors, a couple of curators invited by Simon, and lots of printmaking students. We consider this a mini-opening and we have the final proofs pinned up on the wall. It's a celebration. I shock some of the gathered people by referring to the brown proof as khaki (the color), which in



The celebratory tea. Simon Cooper faces the camera at far left. Dorothy's back is at center facing Lotte Waters, with Roslyn Premont on Dorothy's left.



Australia means really ugly, like *blechhy*.

Dorothy signs the prints after tea. I hold up each OKTP for Dorothy to check orientation, and then turn it to show her the various options (I need to be sure that the prints are right-side up). Each of the four possibilities receives a nod of the head. Only after much prompting does she settle on one orientation. I worry that she's just being agreeable until Roslyn explains that to Dorothy, each of the four possibilities is correct. As these images are aerial views of Dorothy's country, it all depends on from which direction you are viewing the land. Standing and looking north to south, one orientation of the print might be appropriate, but gazing east to west, the print would be rotated 90 degrees. The same holds true for her paintings. Now we're truly done! Her signature is charming and child-like, first name only (Warlpiri, her native tongue, is a spoken language). We go out for Thai food tonight, the Gondwana crew, the Fijians, Belinda and I.

### 8/27, Friday

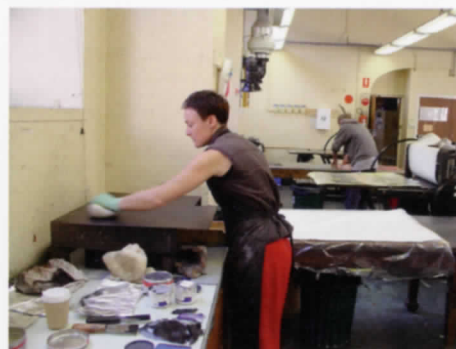
Belinda and I work until noon, and then go for a Korean massage at Ginseng Spa. Hilarious and wonderful. We soak in a bubbling ginseng tub; it's like steeping in dark fragrant tea. There are twelve tables all lined up, and next to each stands a small lady in black underwear. We're atop the tables like pale wal-ruses. They rub us down with gritty mitts, slather us with honey and cucumber goo, swath us in hot towels, jump right up onto our backs and walk around, bonk egg-like tools on our foreheads and butts, pull toes. Never had a massage quite like it, that's all I can say. Although I giggle throughout, I emerge utterly pure and fresh. We float along in bliss for the rest of the day.

At four-thirty we meet back at the printmaking department and then at the pier. One of the printmakers, Bill Mosely, is taking us, Dorothy, and some friends from the school out on his own, private 1920's-era ferry. Bill's an ex-ship-builder and is now back at school learning photogravure from a book, a tremendous feat, let me tell you. I'm helping him get a handle on the process before he and his girlfriend move north to a rural area, where they will participate in a sort of arts cooperative. We head out, the group of us, for a sunset cruise in Sydney Bay. Along our route, we slip under the bridge, pass the opera house, and watch the city lights flicker on as darkness falls. This is a gorgeous sight-seeing tour of the harbor, my first chance to see it. Afterward, Simon, Scott, Belinda, and I have drinks before Belinda has to dash off to the airport, homewards.

I take a cab to Roslyn's for dinner with her and Dorothy and Rusiate and Chris, and then we go to Club Fiji, where it happens to be Ethiopian night. There is an incredible performer singing traditional Ethiopian songs, mournful yet energetic ballads accompanied by his African lute. His fans dance shoulder-shaking moves in front of the stage. I'm completely enamored.

### 8/30, Monday

Clean up today. Donate extra supplies to the printshop. I work on crate-making plans but realize this is beyond my capabilities after a silly stint of diagram-sketching and saw-revving. I'm not the handy-girl with the power tools that I'd always imagined I could be and these plates have a tremendous distance they'll need to travel. Lotte refers me to her shipper, who refers me to another. These people will build crates and drop them off in a couple of days.



Belinda tarletan-wiping a plate.

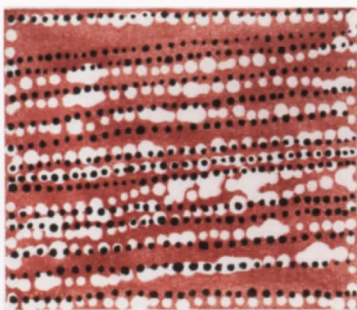
Dorothy's opening at Gallery Gondwana's temporary gallery on Danks Street. Breathtaking show, jaw-dropping work. There are enormous canvases, some five or six feet in size, dotted in geometric or meandering paths to stunning results. Standing in the middle of the room here, surrounded by the spare elegance of this work, I'm filled with a quiet calm. Roslyn gives a talk introducing Dorothy, her background, and the paintings. Rusiate's video plays in the corner, illuminating Dorothy's heritage. Receptive crowd. Three or four people from our San Francisco Bay Area are present.

We check out the new, raw space that is evolving over the next few weeks into the new Gallery Gondwana. Impressive upstairs space with cathedral windows and high ceilings. We have a Thai dinner with the group in celebration of the opening. Fish eyeballs.

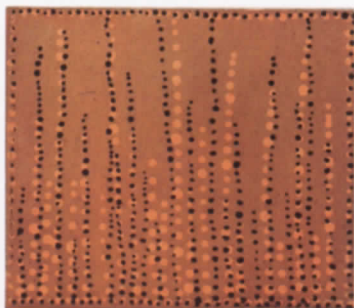
### 9/2, Thursday

The crates arrive at noon. I pack up the plates and the proofs and kiss the crates for good luck. I wait for the Fed Ex guy until 5:30, then it's all done!!! It's hard to believe that this incredible experience is nearly in my past. I'll spend the next two and a half months back in San Francisco with our other Crown Point printers editioning the gorgeous prints. Belinda will join us the last couple of weeks, and on November 18 she and I will watch Dorothy and Ros and Lotte walk into the Crown Point Press gallery for the opening of Dorothy's exhibition there. I am sad to leave Australia. I waited and anticipated and planned and eagerly looked forward to this adventure for an entire year. And now this most exciting part is OVER!

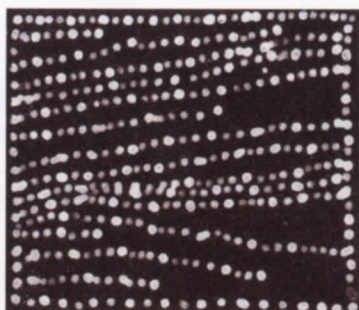




Dorothy Napangardi, *Sandhill Country*, 2004.  
Color aquatint with sugar lift aquatint.



Dorothy Napangardi, *Spinifex Country*, 2004.  
Color aquatint with sugar lift aquatint.



Dorothy Napangardi, *Salt*, 2004.  
Soap ground aquatint.

Each of the three prints shown above measures 4-3/4 x 4 inches on 8-3/4 x 9 inch sheet.  
Each print is in an edition of 50.



**In the Crown Point Gallery, San Francisco:**

**Dorothy Napangardi: *Mina Mina Country***

Nine new color etchings and seven new paintings

November 18 - December 13, 2004

**Please join us in the gallery at a reception for the artist on  
Thursday, November 18, from 6 - 8 pm.**

Design, Layout and Production: Sasha Baguskas  
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