DANIEL WALBIDI

DANIEL WALBIDI

11 MAY – 22 JUNE 2023

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4 East 81st Street
New York, NY 10028 USA

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SHORT ST. GALLERY
Broome since 1998

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Coinciding with the inaugural opening of our contemporary space on 81st Street in New York, we are honoured to be entrusted with this exceptional body of work by Australia's highly acclaimed and leading Yulparitja/Mangala artist – Daniel Walbidi.

When I first came across the space on 81st, I immediately knew it was the one. It had 'that feeling'. An intimate, secluded, jewel-like abode secured in the Upper East precinct, the traditional detailing of the walls represents a bygone era, almost like an antique jewel box waiting to expose the treasures within.

And what better setting than here to introduce an important contemporary artist like Daniel Walbidi to the world stage.

When I first encountered Daniel's practice whilst working at Sotheby's Australia, I immediately knew we had something extraordinary on our hands.

Daniel's paintings depict his traditional homelands and glisten with a combination of silvery metallics and more conventional synthetic polymer paints. Invitingly, he divulges the stories passed down generations through his elders and ancestors, both past and present, for those that listen.

Notably, his works remain congruent with the market's expectations and consistently contribute to the discussion.

I would like to personally thank Daniel and his primary representative – Emily Rohr and Short St Gallery, for entrusting us with this glorious exhibition. Please take the time to read Emily's essay, an intimate portrait of this significant artist.

And in turn, we welcome you to our humble new space. The team and I look forward to meeting with you in person. But for now, it's time for Daniel to speak.

D'LAN DAVIDSON
Director, D'Lan Contemporary

DANIEL WALBIDI
BEYOND LANGUAGE

Daniel Walbidi's art practice is a visual cultural language – an esoteric dictionary of the ancient metaphysical world of desert people. His is not just story-telling or documenting the landscape; he is touching on deeper, more profound elements of desert law and culture, which dates back to the birth of humanity.

For desert people, dots are used because there is no such thing as a solid. Something quantum physics has proven, we momentarily take on a form, but it is ever-changing. Cultural desert people have a deep understanding of this. They have seen massive changes in terms of the climate to the dominant political systems, yet firmly entrenched in their raison d'etre is a complex understanding of the metaphysical and the true nature of consciousness.

Daniel is a meticulously slow artist who takes his art practice and its power in communicating his deep understanding of the nature of existence very seriously. It works on many levels and contains seeds of understanding, often raising more questions than answers. Still, it is the essence of traditional law.

His paintings are layered, and when I ask Daniel what they are saying, he says they will communicate what is required by each viewer of the work. This is the ultimate manifestation of post-modernist theory. A high-order traditional desert person will see the dance – integral to the work. She/he will hear the music and the voices of her / his ancestors that help define the epic tale of the foundation of the country being represented.

On the other hand, a person with no understanding of culture will see an extraordinarily balanced painting – a vibrating, perfect work of abstract art. An exploding celebration of the natural world that penetrates deeply into the subconscious. This may one day lead to dreams of things one cannot know because the nature of the pictorial in desert culture is to reach deep into our psyche to communicate the metaphysical and things that are beyond our current physical reality – it is the nature of ancient law, and is often beyond the limits of written language.

These beautiful elemental paintings, sublime in nature, from Australia's very ancient and remote desert and the world's oldest living culture, have such a contemporary feel. Unlike political art or art tied to the times, this art transcends time and always seeks to find pure joy in the nature of being alive. This message is desperately needed in contemporary western culture's soul-less tech world. He combines such profundity and spirituality in a universal visual language that is so powerful it cannot be ignored, and it should be elevated to its rightful place in all people's subconscious worlds.

EMILY ROHR
Director, Short St Gallery

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2022

synthetic polymer paint on linen
70.8 × 59 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841711

USD 95,000

WINPA

Daniel Walbidi paints the jila (living water) of his ancestor's Country. Winpa is represented as the larger of the black circles in the salt lake, which is depicted as the white or silver areas of his paintings. Accompanying smaller waterholes that also often feature are Winpa's son's that are today found as small waterholes in the edge of the saltpan. This jila (living water) is one of the most significant places for many of the tribes in the Great Sandy Desert, which lies in the north of Western Australia.

In the creation period of the Dreamtime, the ancestral being Winpa was the last to return to the earth and fill the site where he lay to rest with his presence. He is the most significant rainmaker in the desert region, travelling extensively around Australia and his story journeys from the Great Australian Bight into Central Australia and the Kimberley region. His Country is an important place for Daniel's family, who lived in the desert until the early 1970s. In Daniel's town of Bidyadanga, Daniel paints with the elders of the community, who communicate the landscape of Winpa through song and painting. Winpa is significant to his people. Many elders strongly remember losing their brothers and sisters at this waterhole. It is an important ceremonial ground for calling up rain. The large waterhole is connected underground to the landscape's surrounding yinti (creeks) and jila (living water).

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2019

synthetic polymer paint on linen
39.3 × 39.3 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841664

USD 35,000

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2021

synthetic polymer paint on linen
36.6 × 28.3 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841693

USD 22,000

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2022

synthetic polymer paint on linen
59 × 70.8 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841701

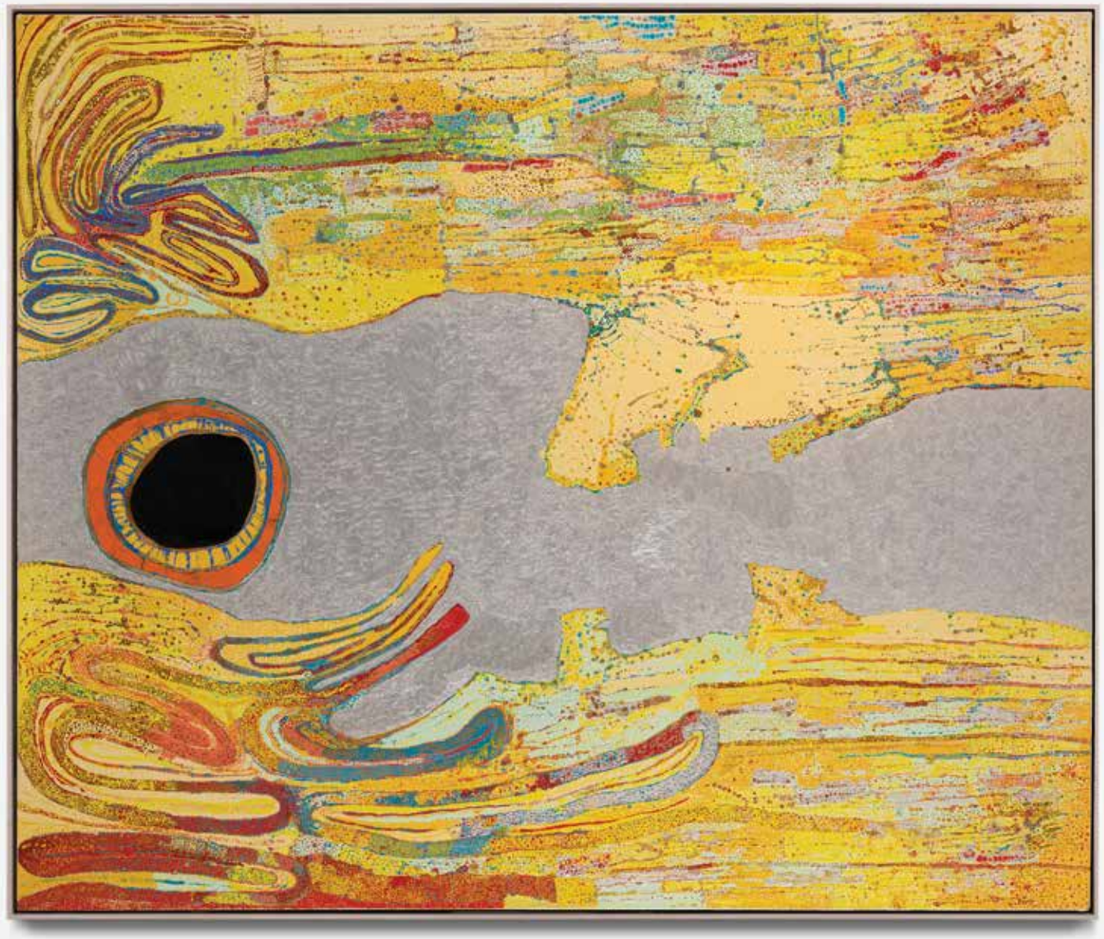
USD 95,000

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2022

synthetic polymer paint on linen
59 × 70.8 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841700

USD 95,000



DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2022

synthetic polymer paint on linen
39.3 × 39.3 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841702

USD 35,000

DANIEL WALBIDI
born 1983
Winpa 2022

synthetic polymer paint on linen
21.6 × 24 inches

PROVENANCE
Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 841708

USD 14,000

D'LAN CONTEMPORARY
Wurundjeri Country
40 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne VIC 3000
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DANIEL WALBIDI
Winpa 2022 (detail)

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ABOUT
Formed in Melbourne, Australia, in 2016, D'Lan Contemporary exhibits and sells exceptional works of art by leading and emerging Australian First Nations artists.

With the view that Australian First Nations art can and should stand alongside the greatest art in the world, D'Lan Contemporary's aim is to engage and educate audiences, and to promote and elevate Australian First Nations art on a global stage.

ETHICS + PROVENANCE
D'Lan Contemporary maintains strict ethical practices and exclusively sources, exhibits and sells works of art with impeccable provenance, to protect the artist, the buyer, the seller – and the marketplace – from fraudulent sales or unethical procurement.

Please contact us at enquiries@dlancontemporary.com.au or visit our website for guidance on best practice when acquiring Australian First Nations works of art.

MISSION
Our mission is to develop an inclusive and sustainable marketplace for Australian First Nations art, and to help support artists, artist estates and their working communities.

D'Lan Contemporary contributes 30% of annual net profits to The National Endowment for Australian Indigenous Visual Art (NEIVA), an independent charitable trust fund established to centralise and distribute proceeds from art sales back to artists and their communities.

BUY + SELL WITH D'LAN CONTEMPORARY
D'Lan Contemporary provides specialist art advisory and management services and offers works of art for sale via selling exhibitions and Private Treaty.

We take pride in sourcing and selling exceptional works of art by Australian First Nations artists on behalf of our Australian and international clients.

We present the finest works of art to the secondary market in two annual exhibitions, SIGNIFICANT and REVERENCE, alongside a program of curated exhibitions.

If you are interested in buying or selling Australian First Nations art with D'Lan Contemporary, please contact us for a confidential discussion or appraisal at enquiries@dlancontemporary.com.au

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