



*Wallaby Dreaming in the Sandhill, c. 1977*

2008.0003.003

Charlie Egalie Tjapaltjarri, clan unknown

Warlpiri/Luritja language group

Synthetic polymer on Masonite

Written by Olivia Barnaby

Spread over a dark red background, an array of yellow, white, orange, and salmon dots cover the surface to create stripes. In this field of dotted stripes are three dotted black and white concentric circles. Between the circles are lines of black V-shapes. Scattered throughout the painting are flower-like objects with small white centers and mustard yellow extensions. Except for the black concentric circles, the painting is comprised of pastel colors, and the majority of the figures are made up of small dots as opposed to full brush strokes. It was painted with a synthetic polymer paint on masonite.

This work was painted in 1977 and was purchased directly by Geoffrey Bardon. No documentation on Bardon's selling or donation of the piece exists, but it is likely that it was acquired by David Cossey in the late 1980s or early 1990s. David Cossey ran Gallerie Australis, a commercial art gallery in Adelaide, from 1991 to its closing (probably in the late 1990s). John and Maria Kluge purchased the work from Gallerie Australis in 1995 and donated it to Kluge-Ruhe in 2008.

Born in Pikilyi around 1940, Charlie Egalie Tjapaltjarri was educated at Yuendumu as a boy and then worked as a stockman for the majority of his early life. He worked at Haasts Bluff for seven years and then at Narwietooma Station for another seven years. In the early 1970s, Charlie Egalie moved to Papunya and began to paint in 1972. During his time in Papunya, he produced many paintings about Wallaby, Budgerigar, and Water Dreamings. His painting *Budgerigar Dreaming* was used in Nadine Amadio's *Wildbird Dreaming* as the front cover. Charlie Egalie married Nora Nakamarra, whom he taught to paint. They had two sons and two daughters, one of them being Natalie Corby. Like her mother, she was taught by Charlie Egalie and later became a prominent artist at Papunya Tula Artists Ltd. In 1991, Charlie Egalie left Papunya and settled near Mount Leibig, an area west of Papunya, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in 2002.

This painting is a visual representation of the journey of Wallaby Ancestors across the desert sandhills near Yuendumu. The V-shapes, and other black shapes near them, are the Wallaby ancestor's tracks. The black concentric circles are sacred sites; Bardon identifies them as waterholes. The flower-like shapes embedded into the dotted stripes are some form of bush tucker (a food source that grows wild in the desert). This interpretation was documented by Bardon when he acquired the work from the artist. This is one of at least four paintings by Charlie Egalie that are titled *Wallaby Dreaming*. It has been suggested that the Wallaby Dreaming story may be connected to the Malliera Ceremony, a male initiation ceremony in which young men are initiated into knowledge about the Tingari ancestors and stories. These rituals are extremely sacred and private to Aboriginal men only, leaving this theory possible, but currently unconfirmed and questionable.

Charlie Egalie's Wallaby Dreaming paintings are all very similar; the waterholes, wallaby tracks, sandhills and bush tucker are generally all present. The colors shift as time passes: the early paintings use more natural colors, such as red ochre, brown, and black, and then

transition into pastel colors, and eventually to brighter, saturated colors. One particular *Wallaby Dreaming* from 1987 uses bright purples and greens, a palette not used by Charlie Egalie until later in his career, when a broader range of colors was available.

Charlie Egalie's contribution to the Papunya Tula Art Movement is amplified through the teaching he provided to his wife and daughter. Charlie Egalie's brother, David Corby, is also a talented artist and has painted for Papunya Tula Artists Ltd. His artistic legacy is significant not only because of his own painting as a pioneering early artist of this movement, but also as a result of his influence on his brother, his wife and his daughter, who became one of the first prominent female painters in Papunya.

## Bibliography

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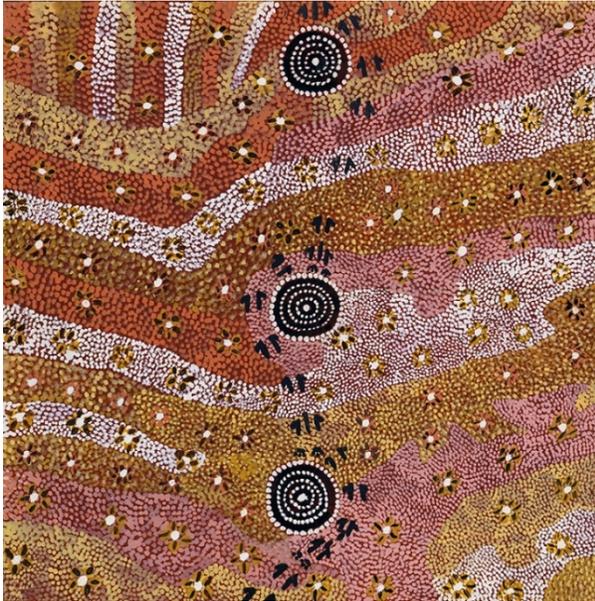
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Location: Storage 3/Flat File Cab. 1/Drawer  
6

ARTIST: Charlie Egalie Tjapaltjarri  
Title: Wallaby Dreaming in the Sandhill  
Accession Number: 2008.0003.003

Creation Date: 1977  
19.5"H x 19.5"W

From Embark:

- “A Wallaby Spirit Being is making a journey across a sandhill country, east of Yuendumu, and his path is shown by his tracks as he moves from one waterhole (concentric circles) to another. The sandhills are indicated by bands of dotting across the painting; various kinds of bush tucker and grass and sand are shown between the sandhills. (Bardon: Papunya: A Place Made After the Story, P. 467)

**MAIN QUESTION: Do we have any reason to doubt what Bardon describes above? Do we know what bush tucker is being represented?**

Unfortunately, I am not familiar with much of Charlie Egalie’s work, so I can’t say what the bush tucker might be. Interesting that the images look something like flowers... I imagine that Bardon got the basic information of this correct. Tjapaltjarri could speak enough English to be clear about this and it is a well-known story . I notice that he painted another one, later, with similar flower signs for bush tucker:

<https://www.blouinartsalesindex.com/auctions/Charlie-Egalie-Tjapaltjarri-3477210/null>  
and again here:

<https://www.jintaart.com.au/artwork/wallaby-dreaming-1>