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# COLUMBIERE TIPUNGWUTI

Columbiere Tipungwuti paints the celestial figures of Tiwi ceremonial culture – Japarra, the moon-man who brought mortality to the world, and japalinga, the stars whose ochred forms adorn dancers' bodies in ceremony and yoyi. "I want to tell that story from long ago – what he did on earth and keep that story going," says the artist. The story tells of Japarra's fateful encounter with Purukuparli and Wai-ai, which led to the death of their child and Japarra's ascent to the sky, where his white light reminds the Tiwi people of the cycles of life and death.

"In parlingarri – old time – Japarra saw the family out bush; the baby died from the sun, and Japarra wanted to take him up for three days and bring him back alive. But the father said, 'Karlu' – 'no'. After fighting, Japarra flew up and stayed in the sky to become the moon and look down on the whole world. Now everyone around the world can't come back; they must follow that father and his son and die when it is their time."

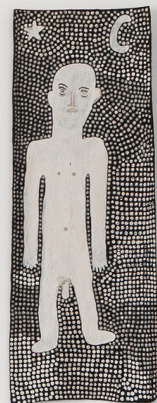
On bark and canvas, Tipungwuti renders the ancestral moon-man in stark black and white, his face striking, solemn and compelling. "Japarra is white – the moon-man has a white body. All the stars are white and the moon is white too," he explains of his elemental palette, made from white ochre gathered on Country at Wurankuwu.

"I want to share my story and the story of my painting with people from all over the world," says Tipungwuti, who also has a background in dance – performing ballet in Sydney in the 1980s and yoyi on the Tiwi Islands. A finalist in the 2024 National Emerging Art Prize, Tipungwuti showed his paintings to great acclaim this year at UNSW Galleries in *Parlingarri Amintiya Ningani Awungarra: Old and New*, a widely celebrated exhibition curated by José Da Silva with Jilamara Arts. In *Painting Now*, Tipungwuti continues this lineage, transforming Tiwi creation stories into powerful, luminous images that bridge earth, sky and spirit.

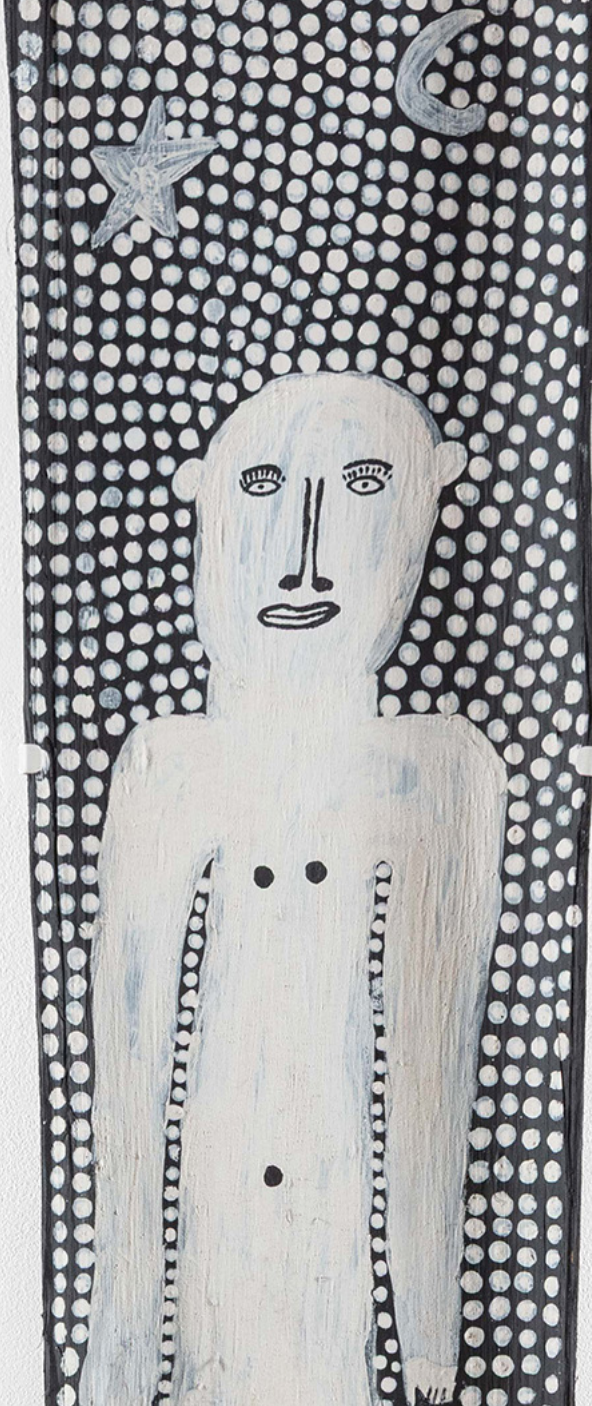
"In years gone by, there was a strong Tiwi tradition of producing nude figurative ironwood carvings that tell [Japarra's] story," writes cultural critic and researcher Tristen Harwood. "Tipungwuti's paintings draw on these important cultural influences to create innovative works grounded in his knowledge of the old stories and connection to longstanding practices of storytelling."



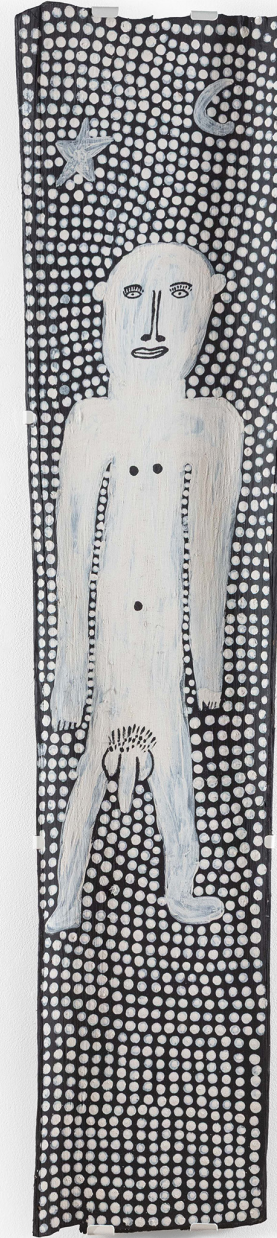




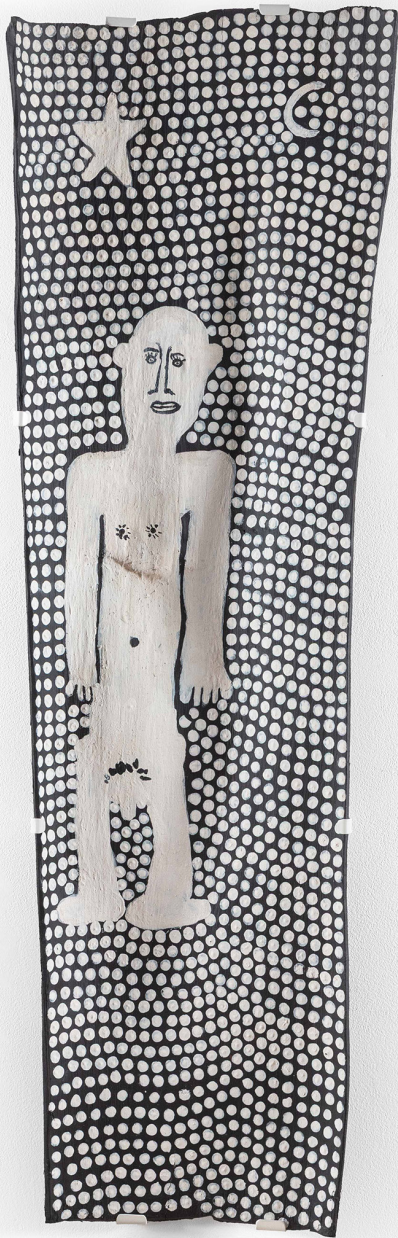




Columbiere Tipungwuti  
*Japarra (the moonman) (119-25), 2025*  
locally sourced ochres on stringybark  
112.5 x 25 cm  
\$2,700



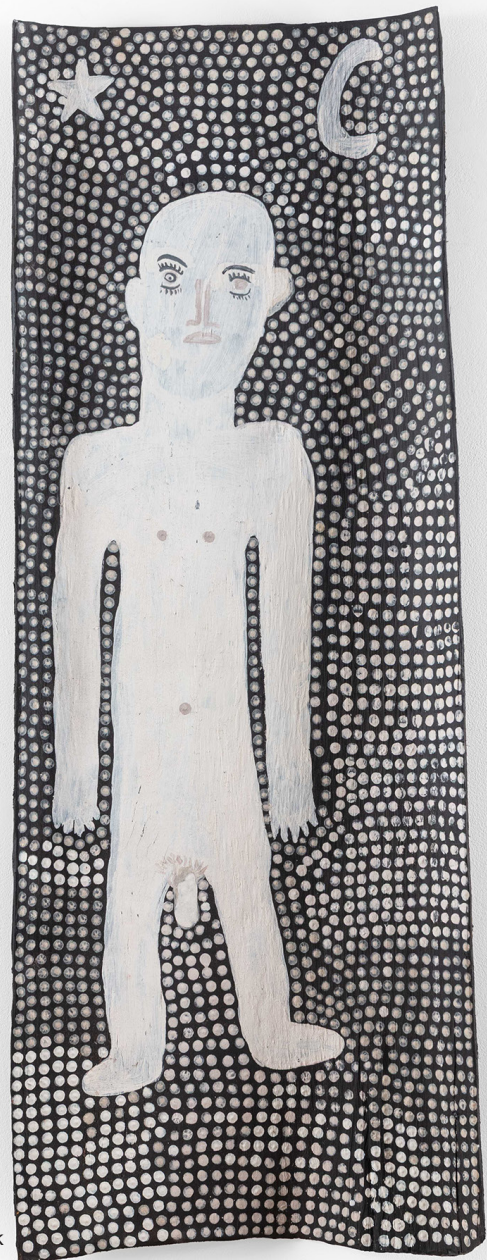




Columbiere Tipungwuti  
*Japarra (the moonman) (120-25), 2025*  
 locally sourced ochres on stringybark  
 99.5 x 31.5 cm  
 \$2,700

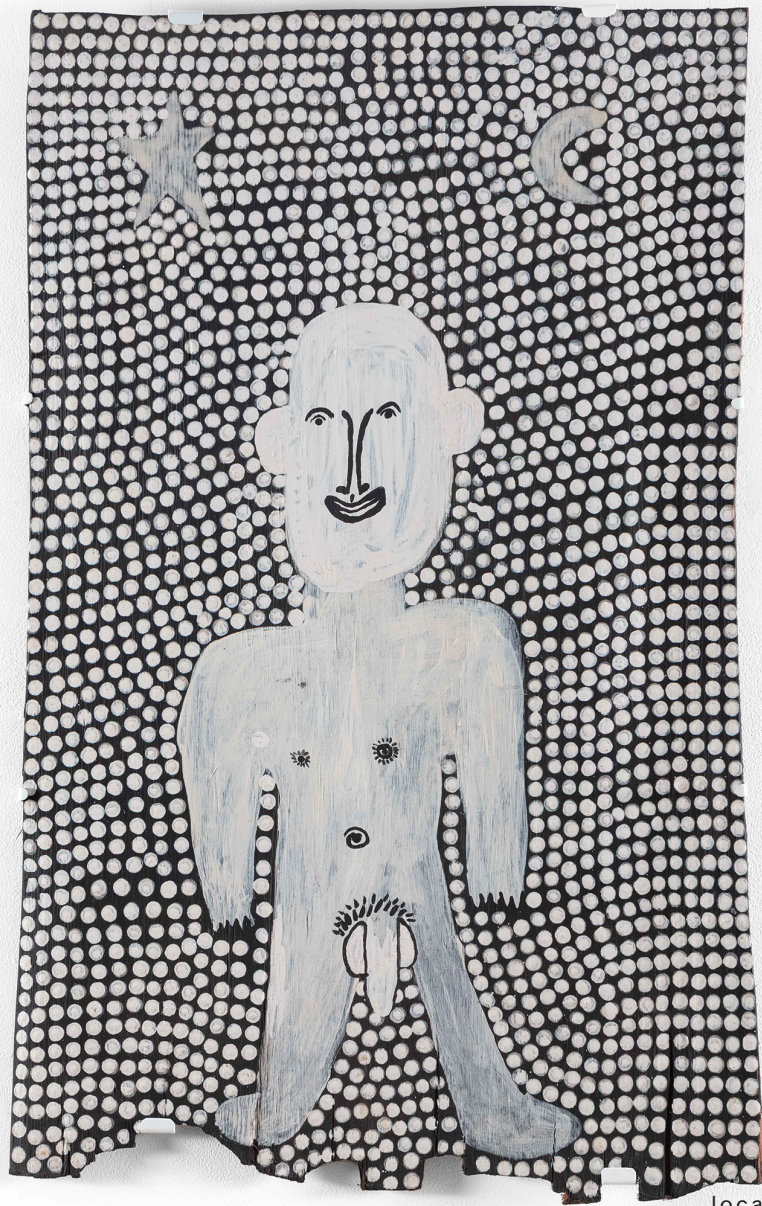




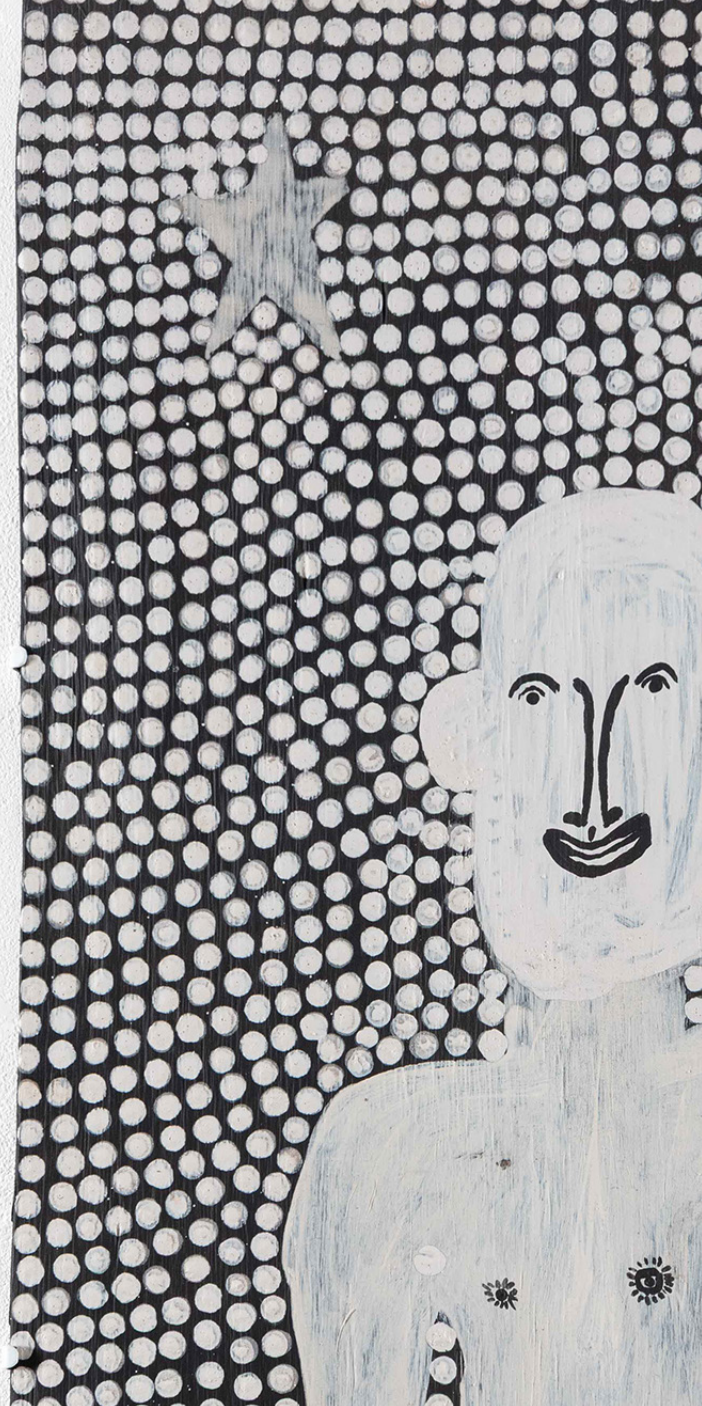


Columbiere Tipungwuti  
*Japarra (37-24)*, 2024  
 locally sourced ochres on stringybark  
 99 x 36 cm  
 \$2,400

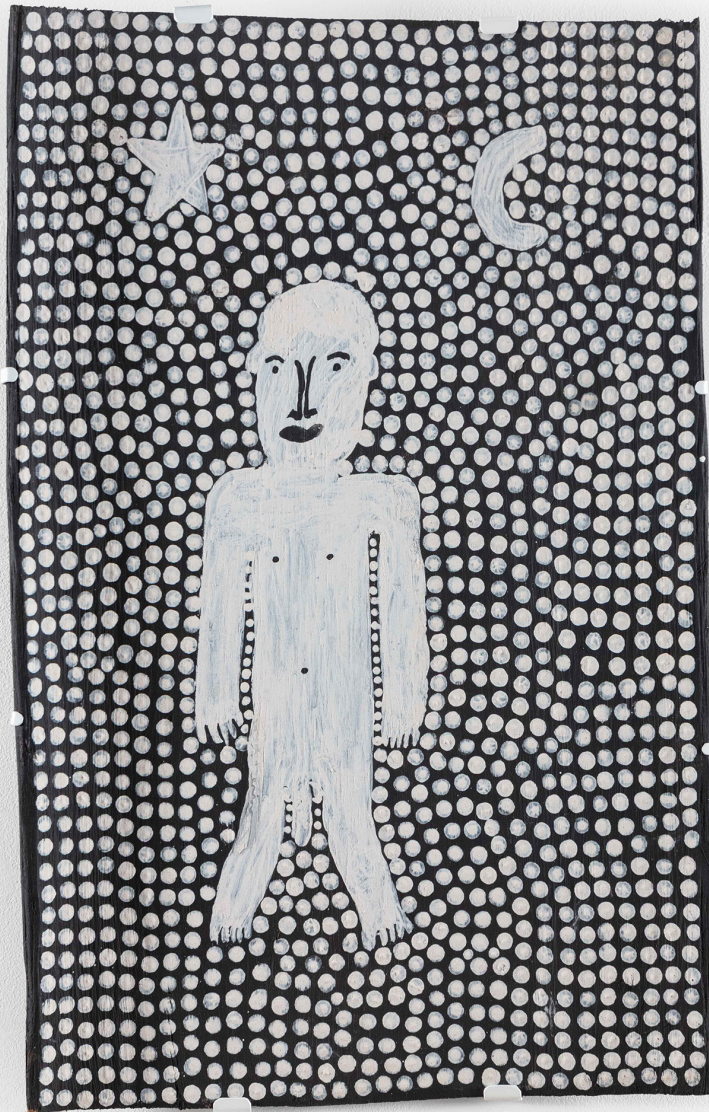
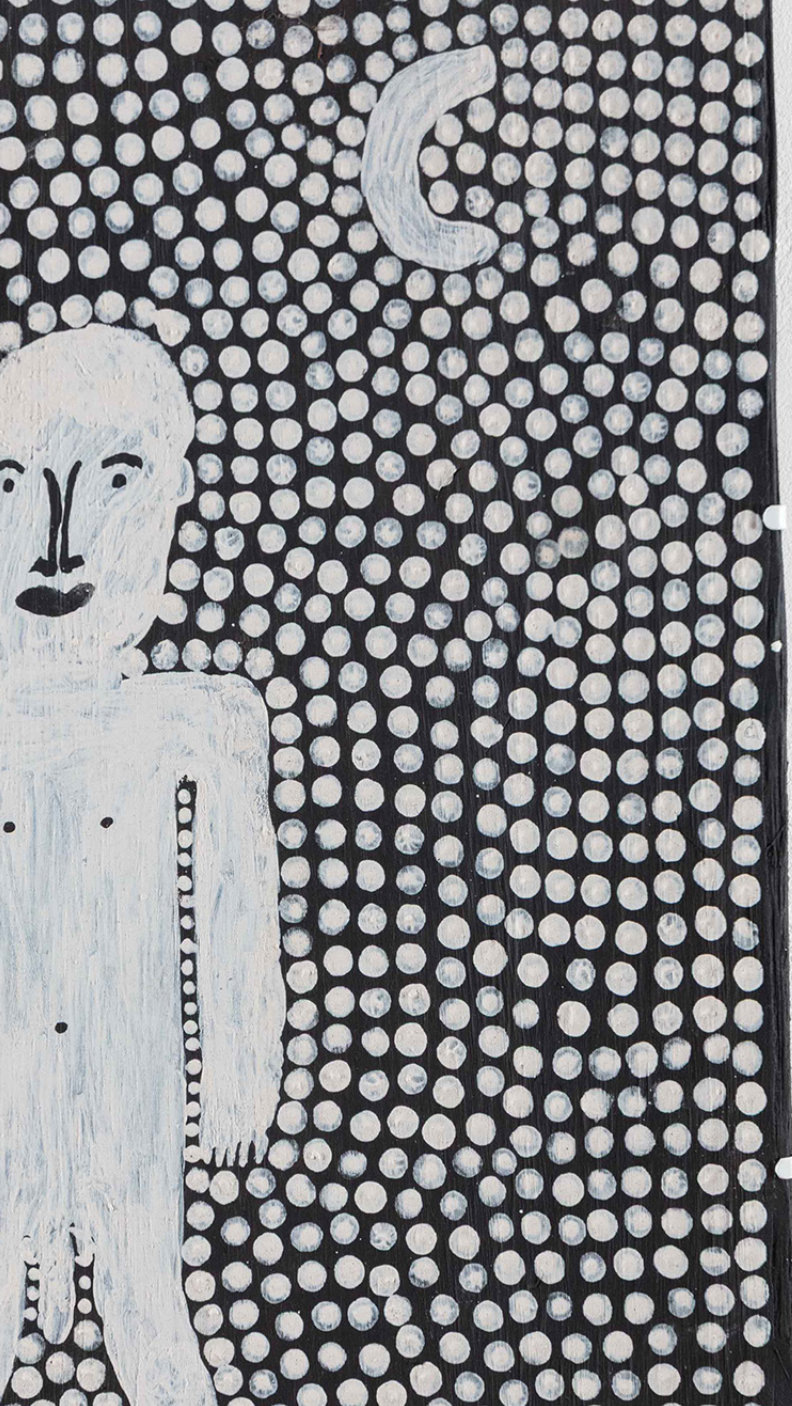




Columbiere Tipungwuti  
*Japarra (263-24)*, 2024  
 locally sourced ochres on stringybark  
 70 x 44 cm  
 \$2,200







Columbiere Tipungwuti  
*Japarra (211-24)*, 2024  
locally sourced ochres on stringybark  
58.5 x 36 cm  
\$2,000



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