



Ikuntji Artists Aboriginal Corporation
POST: CMB 211 Haasts Bluff via Alice Springs NT 0872
STREET ADDRESS: Lot 53, Mark Rd. Haasts Bluff, NT 0872
PH: 08 8956 8783 FAX: 08 8956 8443
fineart@ikuntji.com.au
www.ikuntji.com.au

INFORMATION PACK

**Volunteering at Ikuntji Artists,
Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff, Northern
Territory, Australia**



Eunice Napanangka Jack with her artwork 'Kuruyultu', Photo by Dr Chrischona Schmidt.

About Ikuntji Artists

Ikuntji Artists is a member-based, not-for-profit, Aboriginal-owned and -run art centre. It is situated in the community of Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff, and has a board of seven Indigenous directors all of whom live and work locally.

Ikuntji Artists was the first art centre established by women in the Western Desert Art Movement. Already in the 1980s, women began painting in Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff in the aged care facility. They had been instructed by their husbands and fathers, and they had often assisted them in completing their paintings. By the early 1990s these women artists decided to pursue setting up their own art centre.

Ikuntji Artists was first established in 1992 and was initially set up to fulfil the role of women's centre providing services such as catering for old people and children in the community. After first experiences made in printing T-shirts, the artists began producing acrylic paintings on linen and handmade paper, which quickly gained the attention of the Australian and international art world as well as earning the centre an impressive reputation for fine art. The focus changed from a women's centre to an art centre in 2005 with the incorporation of the art centre as Ikuntji Artists Aboriginal Corporation.

Today Ikuntji Artists are represented in many national and international galleries and institutions. Their art is famous for bold colour choice, decisive brush strokes and a long legacy of internationally renowned artists.



Haasts Bluff at sunset, photo by Nisa Richy.

Introduction

The contribution made by our volunteers is greatly valued and their work is essential to the running of Ikuntji Artists. The generous donation of time and effort and the many skills that our Volunteers bring are of great assistance to the art centre. Living and working as a volunteer in a remote Australian Aboriginal community, whether for a week or for several months, provides a unique opportunity not available to many. We expect our Volunteers to work hard as part of our team and in return we hope that they find the experience interesting and rewarding.

Before considering volunteering at Ikuntji Artists please familiarise yourself with our organisation through our website www.ikuntji.com.au which explains who we are, where we are, what we do, and why we do it. The text and images on the website will help you understand our business and assist you to make an informed decision about volunteering in what can sometimes be a challenging environment. You can also learn more and follow us on social media, www.facebook.com/IkuntjiArtists and www.instagram.com/kuntjiartists.

Ikuntji Artists has welcomed volunteers and interns for many years. The volunteers provide labour and skills essential to the day-to-day operations of the organisation. As a small art centre, we usually have between one and three volunteers working here at any one time, along with a dedicated team of staff. We have hosted volunteers from all over the world, as can be seen on our website.

Please take time to look through this information pack and if you are keen to join us please contact:

Dr Chrischona Schmidt
Manager
fineart@ikuntji.com.au



Ikuntji Artists studio and gallery, Photo by Ikuntji Artists.

Who can volunteer?

Ikuntji Artists welcomed volunteer of any age group (18+) and any nationality. However, we can only take volunteers who have the skills we need at the time. You must contact Ikuntji Artists well in advance of any intention to come. We will then assess if you are needed, and when would be a mutually suitable time for you to come. All volunteers must be available for a minimum of three weeks and must be physically fit. Volunteers may be subject to vetting or required to apply for permission to come, so please expect this. Please note, we do not accept pets so please consider this when making arrangements to volunteer.

Volunteering in a group

In some cases, we do accept groups of two to volunteer together. Though this is subject to the above vetting and permissions. We acknowledge that volunteering alone may be a worry, though we often coordinate volunteer's time to cross over, and you will always have permanent staff on-site with you.

Having visitors while you volunteer

It is logistically tricky to have visitors in terms of accommodation and transport to and from Alice Springs. However, there is a passing tourist trade. There is a camp site at Glen Helen, which is on the road between Alice Springs and Ikuntji (about 60kms unsealed road from Ikuntji). If you plan on having a day visitor/s please ensure that they have applied for a transit permit through Central Land Council (www.clc.org.au) . As Ikuntji is on Aboriginal land, it is illegal for non-community members to stay overnight anywhere on community without a pre-approved permit. Please note: this also applies to partners and family members of staff and volunteers.

Please remember you will be working during your stay at Ikuntji and will be needed during work hours (generally 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday, although some flexibility may be required). So you will not be free to socialize during the work hours.



Arts Worker Anthony teaching volunteers to prime canvas, Photo by Ikuntji Artists.

Volunteer Duties

Depending on your skills set, you could be working in the art studio preparing canvases and paints, cleaning up and generally helping the artists. Alternatively, you could be helping build stretchers and developing the art centre site and gardens that can involve heavy duties. Finally, we have a gallery and office that is the hub for sales, marketing (including website), catalogue management, administration and a thousand other jobs. You may be working with arts workers, staff or on your own (supervised) over your volunteering.

You will be expected to work from 9am to 4pm five days a week, with a lunch break from 12-1pm. However, you will need to be flexible about this depending on circumstances and events.

There are a range of areas that we accept volunteers:

- Working with art materials: Mixing paints, stretching canvas, assisting artists.
- Photography and videography, including editing.
- Cataloguing and online database work.
- Research.
- Administration.
- Working in the native plant garden.
- Assisting artists and the art centre at art fairs, markets and events.

If you have special skills, let us know, we may be able to find tasks that make best use of your talents.



Volunteer giving new paints to artist Eileen Anyama Napaltjarri.

Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff Community - What to expect

- Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is very remote and services here are limited so you need to be healthy, resilient and self sufficient to volunteer here.
- It has a fluctuating population of around 160 people, most of whom are Pintupi-Luritja speakers.
- Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is a small desert Aboriginal Community located 230kms west of Alice Springs. The last 60kms are on dirt road, making it an extremely remote community.
- There is no public transport or mobile phone service.
- It has a church, school, pre-school, shop, aged care facility, child care facility, administration centre and health clinic as well as private housing and a small Airstrip.
- Remote Aboriginal communities have social conditions which can be considered third world. You need to be prepared to cope with this experience.
- Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is home to a large Aboriginal community which maintains its own culture. There are important cultural sensitivities that you need to understand and respect. These include not entering certain areas in and around the community, wearing appropriate clothes and requesting permission to take photographs.
- Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is located in the West Macdonell Ranges and is surrounded by stunning mountain scapes. The community has a river bed, which is dry most of the year.
- The temperature varies from 45 degrees in summer to minus 5 degrees winter.

Cultural Sensitivities

We recommend that you get yourself informed about Aboriginal Cultures. If you can, get a copy of Whitefella Culture and read it. However, please be aware that each community and language groups have their own cultural practices.

For example, many Aboriginal cultures do not consider it polite to talk to new people. It is also often not customary to thank people for their work, or to look into someone's eyes when you talk with them. Some whitefellas who are ignorant of local culture can find this offensive.

Whilst the people at Ikuntji are very welcoming and understand whitefella ways, it is important you take this opportunity to learn and embrace another culture. If you are ever unsure, please ask staff.

Dogs

There are some 'Camp Dogs' around (dogs which live in the community but are allowed to roam free). There can be dog fights and occasionally people can be attacked by dogs. We do not recommend you go out alone at night, but if you are out alone and are scared of dogs please carry a stick or pick up a stone and threaten to throw it at them. This usually keeps them at bay.

Important information

- Working in a remote Aboriginal community requires a high level of emotional resilience. People with recent trauma and/or mental health issues should consider their capacity to work effectively in this environment.
- Volunteers should ensure they have health insurance and sufficient money to sustain themselves for their full stay in at the art centre. If from overseas Volunteers must have health insurance and sufficient money to sustain themselves for their full stay in Australia. Volunteers are not paid for any work at Ikuntji Artists.
- Remote Aboriginal communities have social conditions which can be considered third world so you might be exposed to conditions and illnesses not commonly found in most developed countries.
- Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is a 'dry' community so alcohol, drugs and pornography cannot be brought into the community, purchased or consumed anywhere in the community. This policy is strictly enforced by the local police.
- The art centre and the Donga accommodation are within a secure, fenced and locked compound area. When you venture out into the community you need to act responsibly and be conscious of your own personal security.
- If volunteering at the art centre, you don't need a personal permit to stay at the community from the Central Land Council (CLC). However, you will require a transit permit if driving to and from the community in your own vehicle. This should be applied for in advance though CLC and is free of charge.

- You will need to provide full personal details before arrival, including your residential address, driver's license or passport details, any medical conditions and emergency contacts etc. You must sign a form to indicate your agreement to comply with the Ikuntjji Artists Safety Policy.

Photography

The general rule is: ask before you snap. There are many sacred sites around and even within Ikuntjji/Haasts Bluff and pictures cannot be taken of them under any circumstances. There are also some sacred trees within the Community that cannot be photographed or touched. If you get to go out bush during your stay please ask before taking pictures.

Please also ask before taking any pictures of people (including children) and artworks. Additionally, please do not take photographs of people's houses, this includes yards.

Please note: before you leave, you will be asked to provide a copy of all of your photographs and videos taken while with Ikuntjji Artists. These photographs are kept on file at the Art Centre, for community members and art centre staff to access.

When to come

Ikuntjji Artists is usually closed from mid-December to early January, during the hottest part of the year. However, some staff stay on during this period and there is still volunteer work to be done if you can manage the hot weather, although you will not have daily contact with artists.

The weather is seasonal but as Ikuntjji/Haasts Bluff is in the desert, winter nights can be cold and summer days and nights extremely hot. Check the conditions, temperatures and forecasts with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (www.bom.gov.au) before you come.

Accommodation

You will be provided with modest, bush accommodation free of charge. Depending on the length of your stay this may be in a donga or room. Please expect single bed accommodation, running water, a fridge/freezer, cooker and basic cooking utensils, and access to a washing machine. All accommodation has electricity (via a local generator) and you will probably have access to a TV in a common room. However, we advise you bring your own entertainment. The water supply is via artesian wells and is heavy with minerals. Some people don't like the taste.

If you wish to make trips into Alice Springs before, after or during your stay, accommodation it is at your own expense.

Internet and mobile reception

There is internet connection at the Art Centre which is via satellite (wifi) and is erratic and slow. This is intended for business use; however, you may be able to use it if you bring your own laptop. There is no mobile phone reception anywhere in the community.

There is a public wifi hotspot available in the town centre (limited free or pre-purchased packages), which is a short walk from the accommodation. Please keep in mind that Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff is a remote community, and weather and other external factors often impact the quality and availability of internet. There is no landline telephone service at the accommodation Donga; however, volunteers may use the landline telephone in the art centre during business hours for infrequent calls if required.

Post

The Administration Office receives post once a week via a mail plane. Please get any post addressed to you c/o Ikuntji Art Centre. Please note the mail has to go through Alice Springs first, and then out to Ikuntji so can take several weeks to arrive. We suggest not to use the postal service to receive mail during short stays.

What you should bring

You will need to come prepared to be self-sufficient.

Clothes:

You must dress appropriately for the local culture. In general, certain areas of the body (bottom and thighs) must be modestly covered. You will be working in a working art studio or outdoors and therefore it is essential that you wear sturdy shoes with a closed toe. You will also be working with wet paint so please be prepared to get dirty and don't wear your best clothes!

- Clothes appropriate to the season - The temperature in Ikuntji varies from 45 degrees in summer to minus 5 degrees winter. Please check the average weather temperature of Alice Springs before your departure and pack accordingly. During winter this means lots of long sleeved tops, woolly hat, gloves etc.
- Plenty of old clothes that you don't mind getting paint on.
- Sturdy footwear.
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and a good shade hat.

Food and Water:

There is a small store at Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff with basic supplies (including frozen meat, bread, milk and some fresh fruit and veg) that is re-stocked fortnightly. We recommend that you do not rely on the local shop for your food and water needs. It is worth co-ordinating with whoever is picking you up from Alice Springs to arrange a shopping trip before you leave Alice Springs.

The water at Ikuntji is bore water and is potable, however it does have a distinctive flavour and the supply could potentially get polluted. It is advisable to either buy bottled water (the store does sell this) or bring a water filter of some sort, alternatively you can boil water before you use it.

Medical and personal supplies:

Bring all your medical and personal chemist supplies.

Conditions in the desert are basic and there are high incidents of disease and infection. Before you come to Ikuntji Artists please make sure that you are up to date with Tetanus, Hepatitis A and flu vaccinations (at your own discretion). If you need any medications, please bring them with you. You can also bring anti-bacterial hand wash or body wash if you wish and we recommend you bring a basic medical kit.

Please note you must be physically fit before coming, and if you have any ongoing conditions that you are managing (eg: epilepsy, asthma, diabetes etc) please let the art centre manager know before you arrange to come.

Entertainment

We cannot guarantee access to a TV, so advise that you bring entertainment with you. There will be a stable electricity supply and many volunteers bring a laptop or tablet with music and movies. You can also bring cards, books, games, musical instruments etc. You may also go for walks/runs/do exercise in certain areas around community. Please check with staff before leaving the art centre grounds, as many areas are off limits due to cultural protocol.

Buying art!

Ikuntji Artists centre has an on-site gallery where you can buy paintings, prints and sculptures as well as our other merchandise. We also sell works via galleries in Australia and overseas, and online via our website. Many of the artists who work here are very highly regarded and awarded nationally and internationally.

The Art Centre is a professional space representing high profile artists. Some works are extremely valuable and collectable.

Ikuntji Artists is a not-for-profit organisation run by the local community. The artists who paint here are professionals and the money they earn by selling paintings is a vital income stream. In some places, creating art is one of the only available sources of income.

Please do not approach artists directly about buying paintings; all sales must be through the gallery for legal reasons.

Getting here

Ikuntji Artists is 230km west of Alice Springs, accessible via unsealed roads. You will be expected to get your own flights to and from Alice Springs. We will arrange for you to be picked up from Alice Springs on a day /time that fits into the Art Centre schedule. Please contact us before making travel plans and changes, as our schedule is very busy and subject to change.

Bus

There is a local bus service, the Centre Bush Bus, which comes to Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff twice weekly. The trip takes about five hours each way. Please consult their website for up to date timetables. The trip costs \$110.00 one way and you will need to book a seat. Phone: 08 8953 0127, www.centrebushbus.com.au

Your own vehicle

The last 60km of the Road is unsealed and a 4WD vehicle in good mechanical condition is recommended. The road is sometimes closed after rain. Check the road conditions on www.roadreport.nt.gov.au. OPAL or Diesel fuel, is available in Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff, but is very expensive.

Travelling around the area

You are free to move around the community within the boundary as you wish. However, there are significant cultural sites that you cannot go near within community and outside of the boundary so please ask for permission before you walk.

We recommend that you do not walk around at night, especially alone.

There is no public transport system around the area, though there is a Bush Bus service which operates weekly between Alice Springs, Ikuntji/Haasts Bluff and surrounding communities. Please consult their website for an updated timetable and ticket information. Be sure to check in with staff before planning any travel.

Next steps

If you want to offer your services as a volunteer in whatever capacity you can, please contact us to discuss possible timing. The art centre can be busier at certain times of the year, the accommodation may be fully booked or activities in the community may preclude visitors from being here.

Always check with us first before making arrangements to come.

Contact by email preferred:

Dr Chrischona Schmidt

Email: fineart@ikuntji.com.au

Web: www.ikuntji.com.au

Recommended Reading

Australia Council's Indigenous Visual Arts Protocol Guidelines:
<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/visual-protocols-for-indigenou-5b4bfce4b0333.pdf>

Central Land Council Resources on People and Culture and Transit Permits:

<https://www.clc.org.au/articles/cat/>

S. Hagan, 'Whitefella Culture', Edition 4, Australian Society for Indigenous Languages, 2008.