

Short St. Gallery

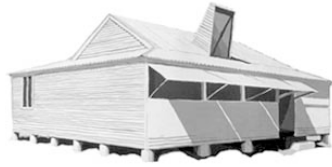


Wentja Morgan Napaltjarri

Born	1943
Language Group	Luritja
Region	Western / Central Desert

Wentja Napaltjarri was born at Malparinga about 1943 and grew up west of Kintore in her father's country, located in the Gibson Desert. Wentja is the daughter of one of the founders of the Desert painting movement, Shorty Lungkata Tjungarrayi and one of his wives, Napulu Nangala. Wentja Napaltjarri has several sisters who are also well known artists; including step-sister Linda Napaltjarri Syddick (born c.1936), adopted by Shorty Lungkata as a young girl, when he married her widowed mother. When Wentja Napaltjarri was young, her father and uncle, along with their families including Wentja travelled east in the footsteps of the Ancestral Emu Men of Tingari cycles, out of the desert. They travelled from water to water. It was hot weather time in the Gibson Desert and there was little water to be found. This area is dominated by high tali [sandhills], so knowledge of the exact location of kapi [water], whether hidden rockholes, claypans, natural springs, or soakages, was critical for survival. Wentja Napaltjarri and her family successfully navigated their journey out of the desert to join other relatives in settlements at Haasts Bluff Mission Outpost about 1948. The family then moved to Papunya around 1960. As with so many Pintupi families, Wentja's extended family established a strong artistic voice in Pintupi culture.

While at Haasts Bluff, Wentja met her husband, Ginger Tjakamarra, who was the son of the artist Makin Napanangka. The couple eventually moved to Papunya, where Shorty Langkata apprenticed each of his daughters. Wentja's first works were collaborative, helping out the men in the family with their work. While they painted the stories, Wentja did the dotting in-fill, characteristic of the Papunya Tula artists. Eventually, Wentja lived at Watiyawanu [New Bore], Mt Liebig with her husband and with her children. Wentja began her own career there, painting for Watiyawanu Artists. Wentja mostly paints Tingari and Kapi Tjukurrpa, the iconography for which has been handed down to her by her father. She also paints Tali [sandhills], Puli [rockholes], Watiya Tjuta [Desert Oaks], and other landmarks central to her Country, and her father's Country.



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Wentja has a very distinctive style and her work highly sought by the Australian and international art collectors. Her work has been exhibited in leading Australian and international exhibitions, including the 2003 exhibition Masterpieces from the Western Desert, in London. Wentja's artwork is represented in important collections in Australia and overseas including Art Bank Sydney, Homes a Court Collection, Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, Kerry Stokes and Thomas Vroom Collections National Aboriginal Art and Culture Institute in Adelaide and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Solo Exhibitions

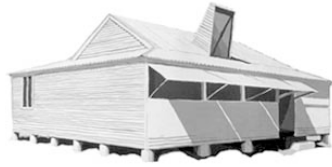
- 2006 Wentja Napaltjarri, Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2004 Ngapa Dreaming, Cooee Gallery Sydney NSW

Group Exhibitions

- 2017 December Tangentyere Artists Gallery, Alice Springs NT Tangentyere Artists Christmas Exhibition
- 2017 November Double Tree Hilton, Alice Springs Minister's Exhibition, NESA Conference
- 2017 October Tandanya Cultural Centre Adelaide SA Tamaranthi Festival Art Fair
- 2017 September Araluen Cultural Precinct Alice Springs NT Desert Mob
- 2017 August Darwin Convention Centre Darwin NT Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair
- 2014 March Dot Code: Desert Artists Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2008 Watiyawanu Artists Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2007 Watiyawanu Artists of Amunturngu Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2006 Australian Aboriginal Art Unknown
- 2006 John Gordon Gallery, NSW
- 2006 Towards Black and White Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2006 Finalist, NATSIAA Awards MAGNT Darwin NT
- 2006 Bond Aboriginal Art Adelaide SA
- 2006 Knud Grothe Gallery Copenhagen Denmark
- 2006 This is our Story – 8 selected works, Colliding Worlds Exhibition Tandanya SA
- 2006 Luminaries of the Desert Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2005 Watiyawanu Artists Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA
- 2005 Divas of the Desert Gallery Gondwana Alice Springs NT
- 2005 Cooee Gallery Sydney NSW
- 2004 Selected in the Alice Prize Araluen Cultural Precinct Alice Springs NT
- 2003 Masterpieces from the Western Desert, Gavin Graham Gallery London
- 2000 Chapel on Chapel Melbourne VIC

Collections

- Kerry Stokes Collection
- Thomas Vroom Collection
- Art Gallery of South Australia Adelaide



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Tandanya National Aboriginal Art & Cultural Institute
Flinders University Museum
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
Queensland Art Gallery Brisbane

Bibliography

2003 Masterpieces from the Western Desert
2010 Desert Country, AGSA

Awards

2007 23rd Telstra NATSIAA Australian National Art Award
2006 Alice Springs Prize
2005 25th Telstra NATSIAA Australian National Art Award selected Museum Art
Gallery Northern Territory
2002 20th Telstra NATSIAA Australian National Art Award Finalist Museum Art Gallery
Northern Territory