



Short St. Gallery

Gordon Barunga

Born 1961
Language Group Worrorra
Region Fitzroy / West Kimberley

Gordon Barunga was born in Derby in 1961 and grew up at Mowanjum Community. He is the youngest son of well-known Kimberley leader Albert Barunga [dec] and painter Pudja Barunga [dec].

Gordon has worked at a number of Kimberley stations, including Pantijan, and Christmas Creek, and worked at One Arm Point, before starting to paint. Gordon's mother was from the Wunumbul people, and he was very close to her, being the youngest boy. His father passed away when he was young, so Pudja raised him. His strong connection to his parent's countries is reflected in his painting. He paints the sites he visited as a child, and the stories he was told as a young boy. He loves to paint Pantijan country, as he lived there for sometime and it was special to his mother.

Gordon remembers the old people painting on boards and bark, and telling the children all of the Wandjina stories. This was very important as the Wororra had been moved off their traditional lands to Mowanjum in the 1950s.

Gordon Barunga paints in natural ochre's at his art centre in Mowanjum. His work is typified by fine brushstrokes, indicating the rain falling as a result of the power of the Wandjinas.

His work is both sensitive and strong, reflecting the beliefs inherited from his family.

Gordon paints both traditional Wandjina images and scenes of the Pantijan country in the style of Albert Namatjira and the Hermannsburg school of realistic watercolour landscapes. His work captures the austerity of the Wandjina figures in a way that closely depicts the actual Kimberley cave paintings and shows his love of his country and all that lives in it.

A curator at one of the leading state galleries has described Gordon as an "incredibly gifted artist".