



Short St. Gallery

Margaret Mungulu



Born	1955
Language Group	Worrorra
Region	Fitzroy / West Kimberley

Biography

Margaret first started painting in 1967 and was taught by her father. As a child she would love to carve boab nuts and emu eggs with copper wire.

"You know how kids work, I was taught to use a knife but I used copper first because the eggs would bust. I was about seven years old, then. I would draw emus, goannas, snakes until my hands got used to wire. All the old men used to do carvings outside their houses. We would pass by them on our way to other countries. We watched them and one day we wanted to be in that situation, carving and painting."

Margaret was schooled in Derby and completed three years of high school studies. "When we were all sitting around the house I was told, you make a decision for yourself. You make a choice. My father was paralysed so we need to push him around and help him. He said you look after my needs, now you need to look after other's needs. Nursing would be a good one. Try and get a job in the welfare." Edna, my sister, and I did nurses' training. "

While working at the hospital Margaret would talk to the old people (patients) about cultural law and traditions before they passed away. When Margaret started painting at the Mowanjum Hall, she used to sit next to the old people and ask questions about the Wandjina, "was it real - what was it."

Margaret has visited most cave sites along the Gibb River Road. She adds, "David Mungulu, my dad's uncle would say, 'I want you to connect with the Wandjina. It is like dreaming and we need to dream. The Wandjina is leader of our tribe'. We stopped painting a couple of times because of arguments with other tribes but we were told, 'don't worry about anything. Keep our people strong, keep the Wandjina happy, repaint them and keep them fresh'."



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Margaret's great grandfather was from Wunumbul, her mother was from Ngarinyin and father was from Worrorra. Margaret's family connections were from all three tribes that make up the Mowanjum community. Margaret says, "We were kept together through the stories of my grandfather and father. We were told stories before books were made. We say you kids are spiritual kids born through "Wudu" (the laws of living)."

Margaret advises that, "When a larger art centre was being considered by the community, art was made and put aside." A decision was made by the community to propose a design for the art centre that would be the shape of the Wandjina. Led by Donny Woolagoodja, the proposition "relied on us to build something, not just for our generation but for generations to come. We went to Derby and asked for help. We made drawings and asked for the roof to look like the Wandjina and for paintings to be shown there." Today Margaret "can walk in this building and paint."

The painting experience for Margaret begins with, "something pops into my head, that picture tells a story in my mind. It's imagination you know. I walk around and wait for the image to come into my head." She adds, "As a toddler, old men at the old site, would bring me paper bark and paint for me with ochre, I used to practice how to draw animals. I was so spoiled by them."

Margaret has exhibited in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Derby and internationally in Slovenia. She belongs to the Mungulu dynasty of painters.

Group Exhibitions

- 2017 paintings & prints, derby Christmas Markets, WA
- 2017 prints, Port Hedland Courthouse Gallery, WA
- 2017 Paintings, Taranathi Art Fair, SA
- 2017 Darwin Art Fair, NT
- 2009 Mowanjum Festival – Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, Derby
- 2008 Mowanjum Festival – Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, Derby
- 2008 Cultural Connections - Artitja Art Gallery Perth
- 2008 Spirit of the Wandjina - Shinju Matsuri Exhibition Broome 6 Gallery
- 2007 Mowanjum Festival - Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, Derby
- 2007 Arralululai - Broome 6 Gallery
- 2007 Mowanjum Exhibition - Woodford Dreaming Festival, QLD
- 2006 Spirit of the Wandjina - Governor Stirling Tower, Perth
- 2006 Power of the Wandjina - Macquarie University Sydney
- 2005 Spirit of the Wandjina - Broome 6 Gallery
- 2005 Keeping the Wandjinas Fresh Exhibition and book launch - Alexander Library Perth
- 2005 Mowanjum Festival – Mowanjum Community
- 2005 Mowanjum Exhibition – Festival of the Dreaming Woodford, QLD
- 2004 Mowanjum Exhibition - Sydney Dreaming Festival
- 2004 Mowanjum Festival I- Mowanjum Community



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2003	Mowanjum Festival- Mowanjum Community
2003	Spirit of the Wandjina - Harvey Bay QLD
2002	Visions from the Cave - Sun Picture Theatre, Broome
2002	Mowanjum Festival - Mowanjum Community
2001	Recent Works - Melbourne Spirit of the Wandjina Gallery
2001	Mowanjum Festival- Mowanjum Community
2000	The Art of the Wandjina - Sydney Olympics Exhibition, NSW
2000	Spirit of the Wandjina - Compass Travel Postonja Slovenia
2000	Mowanjum Festival - Mowanjum Community
2000	Spirit of the Wandjina Exhibition - Melbourne
1999	Power of the Wandjina - Telstra National Headquarters - Melbourne
1999	Recent Works - Spirit of the Wandjina Gallery, Melbourne
1999	Power of the Wandjina - Governor Stirling Tower, Perth
1999	Spirit of the Wandjina Exhibition - Governor Place, Sydney
1999	Mowanjum Festival- Mowanjum Community
1998	Spirit of the Wandjina -Telstra National Headquarters, Melbourne
1998	Mowanjum Festival - Mowanjum Community
1998	Mowanjum Wandjina Art – Matzo's Broome
1998	Spirit of the Wandjina – Grosvenor Place, Sydney
1997	Mowanjum Festival

Bibliography

2010 Art of Story-telling takes on that rich outback hue, Broome Advertiser