



Short St. Gallery



Alec Baker

Birth Year	1932
Skin name	Tjimanya
Birth Place	Saddle Well
Language Group	Yankunytjatjara
Region	APY Lands

Biography

Alec Baker is an elder and respected Tjilpi of Indulkana and the APY (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) Lands. Born in 1932 at Shirley Well, Alec was raised in a traditional way of life with his family, in the rugged bushland and desert regions of the eastern Yankunytjatjara region of the APY lands. Today, Alec is recognised as a respected stockman, cultural lore man, and contemporary artist.

Alec's parents and ancestors are from the Iltar and Kunnamatta regions, and he is part of the Yankunytjatjara language group. Alec's knowledge of the land and his exceptional bush skills have been acquired from a lifetime of experience of living and growing within the land; the stories of his country passed onto him from elders and family.

"I grew up and was born in Shirley Well. My mama (father's) country was Iltar Way, strong country there for law and business. My mother's country is Kunnamatta. I spent my time as a little boy at Granite Downs. I went horse riding, bush camping, and chased bullocks."

"I was a stockman for a long time, we were all working really hard. I was riding in front mustering bullocks and breaking horses. I did lots of jobs at the station too, but always riding, doing stock work out in the country. We've been teaching people the stories we have, and about our culture, and knowledge from our stockmen days"

After retiring from stockmen work, Alec settled at the Indulkana community in the early 1960's with his young family, they lived in a small wiltja (hut made from found objects) by the side of the Iwantja creek. It was he and friend, fellow artist Sadie Singer that travelled



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through the red desert (before the Stuart highway existed) to Adelaide city where they petitioned the Australian government for assistance and funding in establishing the art centre where Alec still works today.

Alec's detailed paintings reflect topographic map-like imagery. The canvases present layers of colour, and dotting which veils any sacred images, or sites. There is a strong sense of place within his paintings; a defined pathway, bold footprints of an emu, a sense of water holes, stoic trees and sheltering campsites, are scattered across his canvas. There is a bold resolve to Alec's work that engages viewers and offers up an invitation of introduction to discover his stories; to follow the pathways and song-lines within his landscape.

"I'm thinking when I making the painting, how to make him a good painting, a strong one. Where to put the kalaya (emus), kungkas (women), punu (trees), tjukula (waterholes)... Sometimes I'm thinking about the colours – dark ones and light ones, sometimes I'm just thinking; from memory all the country I've been at, all the stories I have."

Exhibitions

- 2019 IWANTJA 2019, Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
- 2019 APY LANDS LA - Central Desert Painters of Australia, Olsen Gruin, Los Angeles, USA
- 2019 Tjilpi + Pampa – Senior Iwantja Artists, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- 2018 NGURA KUNPU - STRONG COUNTRY, Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
- 2018 Weapons for the Soldier, Hazelhurst Regional Arts Centre, Gymea
- 2018 Nganampa Ngura Kurunjara: The Place of Our Spirit, Olsen Gallery, Sydney
- 2018 Nganana Kuranyukutu Ma-Palyani, APY Gallery, Sydney
- 2018 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
- 2018 Art of the APY Lands, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- 2018 A Lightness of Spirit is the Measure of Happiness, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne
- 2018 Four Senior Men, One Strong Story, Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney NSW
- 2018 winner – Muswellbrook Art Prize, Muswellbrook Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2017 Kunpu Mayatja Kutjara, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- 2017 TARNANTHI, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 2017 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin
- 2017 Desert Mob, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs
- 2017 Iwantja Arts Exhibition, Short St Gallery, Broome
- 2017 Adelaide Perry Prize for Drawing 2017, Adelaide Perry Gallery, NSW
- 2017 Artists of the APY Lands, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
- 2016 Nganampa Killipil: Our Stars, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, Gymea NSW



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- 2016 *Len Fox Painting Award, shortlisted, Castlemaine Art Museum, Castlemaine*
2016 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2016 Mayatja Pulka (Big Boss), Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
2016 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin
2016 Ngura: Country, Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2015 TARNANTHI, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
2015 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
- 2014 Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River, Western Australia
2014 Artitja Fine Art, Western Australia
2014 Japingka, Perth Western Australia
2014 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2014 Aboriginal Art from the Eastern APY Lands, Kelch Gallery, Freiburg Germany
2014 Songline Project, South Australian Museum, Adelaide
2014 Viscopy, Boomalli Art Gallery, Sydney
2014 Alice Art Prize, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
- 2013 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2013 Harvey Arts, Idaho, United States of America
2013 Japingka Gallery, Perth Western Australia
2013 APY Lands Survey Exhibition, Outstation, Darwin Northern Territory
2013 For Love of Country – Iwantja Artists, Tali Gallery Sydney
2013 Our Mob, Anita Chan Lai Ling Gallery, Hong Kong
2012 Mossenson Gallery, Perth Western Australia
2012 Gallery 139, Adelaide
2012 Tunbridge Gallery, Margeret River
2012 Raft Artspace, Alice Springs
2012 Talapi Gallery, Alice Springs
2012 Aboriginal Pacific Gallery, Sydney
2012 Mossenson Gallery, Perth
2011 Desert Mob, Alice Springs
2011 'Mens Show', Gallery 139, Adelaide
2011 2011 – Sandhill Country: Paintings by Iwantja Artists, Booker Lowe Gallery, Houston Texas 2011 'Mens Show', Mossenson Gallery, Melbourne
- 2011 Iwantja Arts, Mossenson Gallery Melbourne
2010 Desert Mob, Alice Springs
2010 Gallery 139, Solo show, Adelaide
2010 Tjukurpa Pulkatjara, Adelaide Festival Centre
2009 Desert Mob, Alice Springs
2009 Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Northern Territory



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2009	Seymour College
2009	Australia Dreaming Art Gallery, Melbourne
2008	Tandanya
2008	Desert Mob, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2008	Better World Art Gallery, Adelaide
2007	'Skin to Skin', Canberra

Acquisitions and Collections

Kaplan & Levi, USA
Van Aanholt Collection, Melbourne
Fondation Opale, Switzerland
Australian War Memorial, Canberra, NSW
Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs, NT
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT
Artbank, Sydney NSW
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide SA

Awards

Winner – Muswellbrook Art Prize, Muswellbrook Regional Gallery, NSW 2018
Finalist, NATSIAA, MAGNT, Darwin, NT 2017