



Short St. Gallery

Donny Woolagoodja

Born 1947- 2022
Language Group Wororra
Region West Kimberley



Biography

Donny Woolagoodja was born at Kunmunya Mission on the remote NW Kimberley coast in 1947. He is one of a large family and son of Sam Woolagoodja, a renowned lawman who passed away in 1979. Donny was educated in two worlds; this nurtured his understanding of both the white world and the deeply held traditional beliefs of his people. Like his father, he worked on boats and became a skilled navigator.

The waters off the coast of the Wororra lands are some of the most treacherous in the Kimberley, with huge whirlpools, and an extreme tidal range. Donny was named after one of these powerful whirlpools. He says about his Wororra name: *"This is my Ungud. I was named for this whirlpool Karram Muddu. It's up near Augustus Island. That's where my Ungud comes from. My father Sam Woolagoodja named me. There's a snake in that saltwater whirlpool, Warndum".*

As a small child, Donny and his family were moved to Mowanjum, near Derby, far south of their Wororra homelands. Here Donny watched his elders paint the Wandjinas on bark and boards, and learnt the stories of Lai Lai [creation]. After his father's death in 1979, Donny took responsibility for the land, and for passing on the traditions of his culture. He became active in the pursuit of native title, and continues this work today. Donny also began to paint, and quickly became one of the foremost artists of the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre.

Donny's commitment to passing on the traditions of his culture culminated in the feature of his epic Wandjina Namarali at the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. In 2005, "Keeping the Wandjinas Fresh", the story of Donny's inheritance of his father's Law responsibilities and his commitment to his art and culture, was published by Fremantle Press WA.

Donny has maintained his strong connection to Wororra country, living for long periods at Yaloon (Cone Bay), visiting and looking after Wandjina sites, and teaching the new generation of artists.



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Solo Exhibitions

2020	Donny Woolagoodja, Short St Gallery, Broome WA
2014	People of the Wandjina Notre Dame University Fremantle WA
2013	Traversing Borders: art from the Kimberley Queensland University of Technology Art Museum Brisbane, QLD
2011	Mowanjum Japingka Gallery Fremantle WA

Group Exhibitions

2017	Prints Courthouse Gallery Town of Port Hedland WA
2017	Painting Wandjina, Japingka Gallery, Perth, WA
2017	REVEALED: Emerging Aboriginal Western Australian Artist, Fremantle Art Centre WA
2016	VMD Sydney Light, Music & Ideas Festival
2016	Wandjina - 5th NAATSIA, MAGNT
2016	Desert River Sea: Portraits of the Kimberley Kununurra Exhibition WA
2011	Nomad Two Worlds Pier 59 Studios Los Angeles USA
2010	Mowanjum Artist: New works in Ochre, Japingka Gallery, Perth WA
2009	Sharing Difference on common ground- Holmes a court gallery, Perth WA
2008	Cultural Connections, Arititja Gallery, Perth WA
2006	Power of the Wandjina, Macquarie University, Sydney NSW
2005	Keeping the Wandjina Fresh, Alexander Library, Perth, WA
2005	Mowanjum Artists, Woodford Dreaming Festival
2003	Spirit of the Wandjina - Harvey Bay Regional Gallery, QLD
2000	The Art of the Wandjina, Sydney Olympics Exhibition, NSW
2000	Compass Travel Postonja Slovenia - Spirit of the Wnadjina
2000	Spirit of the Wandjina Gallery, Melbourne
1999	Power of the Wandjina, telstra National Headquarters, Melbourne
1999	Spirit of the Wangjina Gallery, Melbourne Recent works
1999	Power of the Wandjina Governor Stirling Tower, Perth

Awards

2019	Finalist Fremantle Print Award City of Fremantle WA
2010	Winner Indigenous Category Kimberley Art Prize Shire of Derby / West Kimberley WA
2000	Winner: Western Australia State Images Art Award
1999	Finalist: Telstra NATSIAA Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

Collections



Short St. Gallery

Berndt Museum of Anthropology
The University of Western Australia Perth WA
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
National Museum of Australia, Canberra ACT

Publications

'Yornadaiyin Woolagoodja' a Biography. 2020 Magabala Books Broome WA.

'We Are Coming To See You' Donny Woolagoodja, Sylvester Mangolamara, Lily Karadada, Janet Oobagooma and Jack Karadada. Compiled by Kim Doohan 2019 Dambimangari Aboriginal Corpora on and Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corpora on.

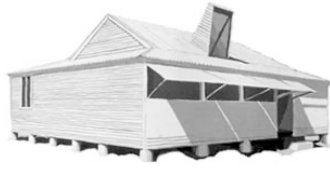
'Keeping the Wandjina Fresh' co-authored with Valda Blundell 2005 Fremantle Press. This has become a classic publication for the many people interested in learning more about the unique Wandjina beliefs of the Western Kimberley peoples.

Commissions

2000 Sydney Olympics Opening Ceremony - large scale sculpture

Bibliography

2004	Sea creatures depicted in works Library Lines
2004	Hervey Bay gallery to host Visions From the Cave, The Observer
2005	Cultures unite in spectacular finale Denmark Bulletin
2005	keeping the Wandjina Fresh
2005	Book traces Wandjina journey, Broome Advertiser
2008	Lawyers offer lesson in legacy, The Australian, Victoria Laurie
2008	Wandjina triumphs in Kimberly land claim, The Australian, Debra Jobson
2008	Kimberly tribes share spirit, The West Australian, Niall McIlroy
2009	Sharing difference on common ground
2010	Origins of art discussed as leaders meet, Broome Advertiser, Flip Prior
2010	Sacred spirit statue has to be removed, Broome Advertiser, Ben Jones
2010	Artists to sue gallery over sacred image, Broome Advertiser, Flip Prior
2010	Artist under fire in landmark case, Broome Advertiser
2010	Mowanjumb Artists Defend Their Art in Sydney, Arts Backbone, Jenny Wright
2010	Community fights to control its destiny, The Australian, Paige Taylor
2010	Mowanjumb 50 year Community History
2011	Hall visit is talk of the town in Derby, The West Australian, Flip Prior



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- 2012 Desert centre preserves spirit of a people in the language of art, The West Australian, Flip Prior
- 2013 Dale's daughter to show own art, Broome Advertiser, Therese Phillips
- 2015 'Mowanjum Daytrip,' Philippa Jahn, Desert River Sea blog