



# Short St. Gallery



## Donny Woolagoodja

Born	1947
Language Group	Worrorra
Region	West Kimberley

Donny, chairman of Mowanjum Artists Spirit of the Wandjina Aboriginal Corporation (MASWAC), is the fourth of ten children. His father, Sam, was the last of the Worora banmen (lawman and medicine man). Donny's remarkable upbringing bridges the white Christian beliefs of which he became aware at the mission churches, and the ancient Wandjina laws his father taught him. It allows him to move easily between his Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people. The influence of his father and grandfather can be seen in Donny's art, which illustrates the many stories of the land to which he belongs. Soon to be a fully certified teacher of fine art, majoring in Aboriginal Art, Donny was a finalist in the 1999 Telstra National Indigenous Art Award and won the WA State Images Art Award 2000. His work was a feature of the Sydney Olympic Games opening ceremony. Donny Woolagoodja was born at Kunmunya Mission on the remote NW Kimberley coast. Donny was educated in two worlds, understanding both the mission, 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 whirlpools. He says about his Wororra name,

" This is my Ungud. I was named for this whirlpool Karram muddu. It's up near Ausustus Island. That's where my Ungud comes from. My father Sam Woolagoodja named me. There's a snake in that salt water whirlpool, Warndum"

As a small Child, Donny was moved with his family to Mowanjum, near Derby well south of Wororra homelands. He watched his elders paint the Wandjinas on bark & 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 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



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Mowanjum. Donnys Wandjina Namarali was featured at the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games. In 2005, "Keeping the Wandjinas Fresh", the story of Donny's inheritance of his father's Law responsibilities, was Published by Fremantle Press Co. - written with Valda Blundell, the book is in its second printing. Donny has maintained his strong connection to Wororra country, living for long periods at Yaloon (Cone Bay), visiting & looking after Wandjina sites, and teaching new generations of artists.

## 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



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2019 Finalist Fremantle Print Award City of Fremantle WA  
2010 Winner Indigenous Category Kimberley Art Prize Shire of Derby / West Kimberley WA

## Collections

Berndt Museum of Anthropology  
The University of Western Australia Perth WA

Donny Woolagoodja has works in many major collections and has sold and exhibited his work in Europe, USA and around Australia

## Publications

'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 publica on 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 Mowanjum Artists Defend Their Art in Sydney, Arts Backbone, Jenny Wright



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- 2010 Community fights to control its destiny, The Australian, Paige Taylor  
2010 Mowanjum 50 year Community History  
2011 Hall visit is talk of the town in Derby, The West Australian, Flip Prior  
2012 Desert centre preserves spirit of a people in the language of art, The West Australian, Flip Prior