



# Short St. Gallery

## Patju Presley

**Born** 1945  
**Language** Pitjantjatjara  
**Region** Tjuntjuntjara: WA

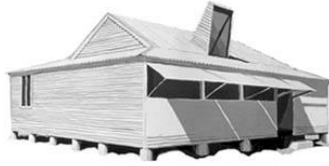


### Biography

Patju Presley was born in the 1940s at Itaratjara, an important site between to the community settlement of Watarru and Kalayapiti in the Great Victoria Desert. He is a senior Pitjantjatjara Law man with great knowledge of the geography of the Western Desert and the associated Tjukurpa. His intimate knowledge of the country is directly related to survival in this beautiful but sometimes harsh environment learned from the generations of his ancestors.

Connections between the Land, the provider of food, water and shelter and the Tjukurpa a spiritual understanding of the world are finely interwoven in his paintings, creating works of an elegant abstraction. Each work is related to a specific site and ancestral beings and is strongly based on his experience and perception of the Law and the Land. When he was a young child he lived a traditional lifestyle walking along Tjukurpa tracks that linked sacred sites and water sources. From the tjilpis (old men) he learnt the ways of life in the desert and Anangu social order, law, culture, Tjukurpa and ceremony. Patju first learnt about Christianity from Mr Wade, the missionary who came to the desert on camel preaching the Bible and giving out tea and damper. When the mission was established Patju spent some time there learning English to read and write hymns and Bible stories. Patju trained to be a preacher at the mission at Ernabella. He is also a strong cultural man who practices traditional cultural business and inma (ceremonial singing and dancing), carves punu (ceremonial and utilitarian objects) and hunts malu (kangaroo), kalaya (emu), kipara (bush turkey) and rabbit. Patju resides at Tjuntjuntjara Community with his wife Ivy Laidlaw.

In his paintings Patju refers to many of the Tjukurpa of the country of the Great Victoria Desert including the Wati Kipara (Bush Turkey), Wati Kutjara (Two Water-Snake Men), Kalaya (Emu), Wati Pira (Moon Man) and Minyma Kutjara (Two Sisters). His images are visual representations of the epic journeys and creation stories of the country. References to important landforms, rockholes and Tjukurpa tracks implicitly evoke the tjukuritja beings (of the dreaming), their interactions and



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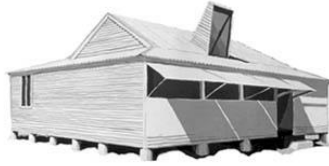
activities. References to features in the country by desert artists are heavily loaded with complex symbolic meanings and interconnected layers of cultural references.

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2022 PATJU Melbourne Art Fair with Vivien Anderson Gallery. Melbourne. Victoria  
2018 PATJU, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria  
2007 Patju Stanley Presley New Work, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, Vic

## Group Exhibitions

- 2023 Voir L'Invisible, Museum MAAM in Angouleme, France, in conjunction with Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery  
2022 Claim the land, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Belgium  
2022 Living Water, Raft Airspace, Alice Springs, NT  
2022 Short Street Gallery Broome  
2022 Aluni - Resonance - Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium  
2021 Spinifex Wati Tjuta, Aboriginal and Pacific Arts, Sydney  
2021 KING & WOOD MALLESONS CONTEMPORARY FIRST NATIONS ART AWARD, fortyfivedownstairs gallery 452 Spinifex Arts Project – Patju Presley Page 2 of 3 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
2021 Making a Mark, ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore  
2019 “Wati: Men from Spinifex” Aboriginal and Pacific Arts, Sydney, NSW.  
2019 Explosion, Aboriginal Signature • Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium  
2018 Pila nguruku kapi walkatjara – Painted Waters of Spinifex Country, ARTKELCH at Skulpturenpark Wesenberg, Wesenberg, Germany  
2017 Spinifex Arts 20th Anniversary, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle. WA  
2017 Tarnanthi - Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. SA  
2017 Spinifex Ascendent Short Street Gallery, Broome, Western Australia  
2017 Shut Up and Paint, National Gallery of Victoria International level - 17 September 2016 – 12 February 2017  
2017 Spinifex: Aboriginal Paintings from the Robert Kaplan and Margaret Levi Collection, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, Nevada. U.S.A.  
2017 Wüste – Meer – Schöpfermythen, ARTKELCH at Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Köln, Germany  
2016 Pila Nguratja - In Spinifex Country Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne  
2016 Rawa Nyinanyi- Unbroken. Outstation Gallery, Darwin. N.T.  
2016 Exposition Spinifex Arts Project, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Fine Art, Belgium



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- 2016 Community - Spinifex Art project - Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
- 2016 LORE The visual language of cultural Identity, Raft Artspace, Tasmania
- 2016 Tjungutja – Art of the Spinifex Collaborative. Redot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore
- 2015 Spinifex Arts Project 2015. Aboriginal and Pacific Arts, Sydney, N.S.W
- 2015 Tarnanthi - Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. SA
- 2015 “Irruntju Wati – Men of Irruntju” Aboriginal and Pacific Arts, Sydney, N.S.W
- 2014 Spinifex Tjukurpa ReDot Gallery, Singapore
- 2014 Pila- Spinifex Land. Outstation Gallery, Parap, Darwin. NT.

## **Awards**

- 2017 Port Hedland Art Awards - finalist

## **Collections**

ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, PERTH, WA

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY COLLECTION, PERTH, WA

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA.

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY, BRISBANE, QLD

STEVE MARTIN PRIVATE COLLECTION, NY, USA

THE ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, SYDNEY, NSW

THE CORRIGAN COLLECTION, AUSTRALIA

THE KAPLAN-LEVI COLLECTION, USA

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA, ACT

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND ART MUSEUM, BRISBANE, QLD