



Short St. Gallery

SHIRLEY PURDIE

Born	1947
Birth Place	Gilban – Mabel Downs Station
Language Group	Gija, Kimberley Kriol, Gija
Region	East Kimberley
Ngarrangarni/Totem	Crow
Skin	Nangari



Biography

Shirley Purdie (Birmariya) has been painting for more than twenty years and is an artist of increasing significance and seniority. Her cultural knowledge and artistic skill complement each other to produce a practice that holds great strength. Shirley is also a prominent leader in Warmun community and an incisive cross-cultural communicator.

Inspired by more senior Warmun artists including her late mother, the great Madigan Thomas, as well as Rover Thomas and Queenie McKenzie, Shirley began to paint her country in the early 1990's. Shirley's uncle, artist Jack Britten, said to her, "Why don't you try yourself for painting, you might be all right".

Shirley says: "it's good to learn from old people. They keep saying when you paint you can remember that country, just like to take a photo, but there's the Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) and everything. Good to put it in painting, your country, so kids can know and understand. When the old people die, young people can read the stories from the paintings. They can learn from the paintings and maybe they want to start painting too." Shirley's body of work explores sites and narratives associated with the country of her mother and father and is characterised by a bold use of richly textured ochre.

Significant places such as Baloowa, Jirragin and Gilban lie on country now taken in by Violet Valley and Mabel Downs cattle stations. Much of her work also explores spirituality and the relationships between Gija conceptions of Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) and Catholicism. In 2007 Shirley was awarded the Blake Prize for Religious Art for her major work *Stations of the Cross*. Colonial histories of the region also figure in Shirley's work in which she relates accounts of early contact, massacre, warfare and indentured labour since the incursion of pastoralists into Gija land in the late 1800's.

Shirley is presently working on major exhibition and publication of great cultural and



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ecological value, documenting through painting and in Gija language the plants and trees of her country - *Goowoolem Gijam*.

Mediums

Ochre on Wood
Ochre on Linen

Themes

Barluwan & Garlunggurji – Norton Bore and Violet Valley Stories
Massacre Stories (Mistake Creek)
Stories of Station Life & Family
Traditional Stories for Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) – Jirraginy, Ngowalabun, Ngawan
Two-Way Explorations of Christianity

Solo Exhibitions

2021 What's Happening Now? – Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin
2014 Gilban – Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2012 Alcaston Gallery – Melbourne, VIC
2004 Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney, NSW

Group Exhibitions

2022 Ngamu & Kilyingem: Old and New – Artworks from Gija Women – Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2020 The Ochre Story – Japingka Aboriginal Art, Fremantle, WA
2020 Badem Mawoondool - Red ochre, White ochre – Aboriginal Contemporary, Sydney
2020 Matriarchs 2020 – Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin
2020 Darling Portrait Prize – National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
2020 Summer Salon – Artitja Fine Art Gallery, South Fremantle, WA
2019 Our Land Our Place" NAIDOC Week exhibition by Artitja Fine Art – Government House, Perth WA
2019 Desert River Sea, Art Gallery of Western Australia – A landmark exhibition of Kimberley Aboriginal Art held at the Art Gallery of WA in February 2019.
2018 2019 Hedland Art Award – Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland
2018 Art for Wellbeing – Boab Health Services, Kununurra WA
2018 So Fine! – National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
2018 GIJA Exhibition – Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Queensland - An exhibition honouring the Warmun artists, and 20 years of the Gija art movement.



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- 2018 Warmun At Twenty Exhibition – A group exhibition celebrating 20 years of Warmun Art Centre, Nancy Sever Gallery, Canberra
- 2017 When The Sky Fell – Legacies of the 1967 Referendum - Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, Western Australia
- 2017 For the Women – Tandanya, Adelaide
- 2016 Telling Tales: excursions in narrative form – Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia
- 2015 LIVELY: New Prints from Warmun Arts – Nomad Arts, Darwin NT
- 2015 Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning – Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
- 2014 Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning – RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, Vic
- 2013 Jadagen Warnkan Barnden – Changing Climate in Gija Country – Goulburn Regional Gallery, NSW
- 2013 Gija Manambarram Jimerrawoon – Gija Senior People Forever – Australian Embassy, Paris, France
- 2013 Jadagen Warnkan Barnden – Changing Climate in Gija Country - The Cross Art Projects, Sydney, Australia
- 2010 Warmun - Our Earth Our Story – Art Images Gallery, Norwood, SA
- 2010 Kimberley Aboriginal Artists – Cross Cultural Art Exchange, Darwin, NT
- 2009 The Youngest One – Chapman Gallery - Canberra, ACT
- 2009 Ochre Dreaming: Stories from the East Kimberley – ReDot Gallery, Singapore
- 2009 Warmun Ochres: Rich Earth – Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2009 Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture Australian Museum and Object Gallery – touring nationally
- 2009 Sharing Differences on Common Ground: Mangkaja, Mowanjum, Waringarri, Warmun – Holmes a Court Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2009 Warmun Ochres: Rich Earth – Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2009 Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture – Australian Museum & Object Gallery, touring nationally
- 2009 The Youngest One – Chapman Gallery, Canberra, ACT
- 2009 Ochre Dreaming: Stories from the East Kimberley – ReDot Gallery, Singapore
- 2008 Blake Prize Touring Exhibition, NSW & VIC
- 2008 New Voices in Gija Art – Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
- 2008 The Women of Warmun, Ten Years On – Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2008 Traces of Country: Indigenous Fine Art Prints – Gecko Gallery, Broome, WA
- 2008 East of East Kimberley: Warmun in Asia – ReDot Gallery, Singapore
- 2008 25th Telstra NATSIAA – Musuem & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, NT
- 2008 Warmun at Ten – Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin, NT
- 2008 Warmun at Ten: A Decade of Warmun Art – Hogarth Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 2008 A Stint of Prints: New Etchings from Warmun Art Centre – Nomad Art Productions, Darwin, NT
- 2007 Warmun Snapshot – Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin, NT



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- 2007 Dog Dreamings – Seva Frangos Art, Perth, WA
2007 Greetings from Turkey Creek – Mary Place Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2007 Warda Wurraren (all kinds of stars) – Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
2007 Palya Art in Melbourne – Melbourne, VIC
2007 Ochre, Brushes, Canvas: New Work from Warmun – Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2007 Ngarrangkarni & Christianity – Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2006 Warmun Art Centre Presents – Mary Place Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2005 New Work from Warmun – Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA
2005 Warmun Group Show – Framed Gallery, Perth, WA
2005 Best of Warmun – Gadfly Gallery, Dalkeith, Perth, WA
2004 Gallery Gondwana Group Show – Alice Springs, NT
2003 Recent works by Warmun Artists – Darwin, NT
2002 The World Luxury Cruise Ship in conjunction with Thornquest Gallery – Thornquest Gallery, Gold Coast, QLD
2002 Bush Painting – Chapel off Chapel, Melbourne, VIC
2002 Collectors Show in association with Seva Frangos – Span Gallery, Flinders St, Melbourne, VIC
2002 Easter Show – Bett Gallery, Hobart, TAS
2002 Shirley Purdie and Gordon Barney – Framed Gallery, Darwin, NT
2002 Coomalie Culture Centre – Bachelor, NT
2002 Warmun Group Show – Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, SA
2002 Women of the East Kimberly – Tandanya, Adelaide, SA
2001 Grand Opening Exhibition of Thornquest Gallery – Thornquest Gallery, Group Show, Gold Coast, QLD
2001 Past Modern – Short Street Gallery, Australia Square, Sydney
2001 Four Women of Warmun – Artplace, Perth International Festival, WA
2001 New Painting's for Warmun Art Centre – Fireworks Gallery, Group Show, Perth, WA
2001 Ochres – Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
2001 Das Verborgene im Sichtbaren – Staedtsche Galerie Wolfsburg, (in cooperation with Aboriginal Galerie Baehr, Speyer), Germany
2001 Short on Size, Groups show with Jiliamara, Balgo Hills and Warmun Artists – Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2001 Beyond Wings, an exhibition of Indigenous Art selected by Helen Read during her travels – Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, SA
2001 Grand Opening Exhibition of Thornquest Gallery, Group show – Thornquest Gallery, Gold Coast, QLD
2000 Ben Grady Gallery – Canberra, ACT
2000 Kunst Der Aborigines – Gallerie Baehr, Germany
2000 Galerie Australis – Adelaide, SA
2000 Bett Gallery – Hobart



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2000	The Art of Place, National Indigenous Heritage Art Award, Canberra
2000	State of My Country – Hogarth Galleries, Paddington, Sydney
2000	Michael Carr Gallery – Sydney
2000	Melbourne Art Fair (Artbank & Bett Gallery, Hobart)
2000	Commonwealth Institute – London, UK
2000	Anthropological Museum – Freiburg, Germany
1999	Hogarth Galleries – Paddington, Sydney
1999	Japingka Gallery – Fremantle, Perth
1999	Hale School Annual Art Exhibition – Perth
1999	East Kimberley Art Awards – Kununurra
1999	Karen Brown Gallery – Darwin
1999	Chamber of Commerce – Wuerzburg, Germany.
1999	Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi – Melbourne
1998	Span Gallery – Melbourne
1995	Savode Gallery – Brisbane
1994	National Aboriginal Art Award – Australian Heritage Commission
1994	Maintaining Family Tradition, International Year of the Family Conference – Adelaide Festival Centre

Awards

2020	Finalist – Darling Portrait Prize
2018	Finalist – Hedland Art Award
2017	Highly Commended for Kangaroo Rock Painting – Cossack Art Awards 2017
2016	Finalist – Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award
2008	Winner – Needham Religious Art Prize
2007	Winner – Blake Prize for Religious Art
2007	Finalist – Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award

Collections

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA
Artbank
Australian War Memorial Collection, Canberra, ACT
Commonwealth Institute Collection, London, UK
Edith Cowan University Collection, Perth, WA
Harvey Wagner Collection, USA
Kerry Stokes Collection
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Northern Territory University Collection, Darwin, NT



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Bibliography

- 2011 Who's Who of Australian Women carries the theme "Reflections on Happiness"
- 1999 Ngalangangpum Jarrakpu Purrum: Mother and Child, Margaret Stewart, Magabala Books, Broome, WA