



Short St. Gallery



Bugai Whyoulter

Born: 1939
Language: Kartujarra
Region: The Pilbara, WA

Bugai is a Kartujarra woman and a senior custodian of the lands surrounding Kunawarritji (Canning Stock Route Well 33). She was born in the 1940s at Pukayiyima, on present day Balfour Downs Station, though her parents soon travelled northward with her through Jigalong and Nullagine toward Kunawarritji. She grew up, walked and hunted with her parents, younger sister Pinyir Nancy Patterson (dec.), and extended family, primarily travelling around the eastern side of the Karlamily (Rudall River) region and along the midsection of the Canning Stock Route, from Kartarru (Canning Stock Route Well 24) to Kunawarritji (Canning Stock Route Well 33). As a young woman Bugai travelled up and down large tracts of the 1850km long Canning Stock Route, where she and her husband met and walked with cattle drovers.

In 1963 Bugai's family encountered the surveyor Len Beadell, who was then grading roads for the Woomera Missile Testing Range. He gave the family flour, which Bugai was able to use to show her relatives how to cook a simple damper (flat bread). Bugai had herself been taught how to bake with flour during her earlier interactions with drovers in her travels on the Stock Route. Shortly afterward Bugai, her husband and the extended family group she was with at the time together decided to move to Jigalong Mission. There they joined many other relatives that had already travelled in from the desert following a prolonged and severe drought. They were some of the last Martu to leave the desert.

From Jigalong Bugai moved to Aboriginal communities in Strelley, Punmu, and Parngurr before relocating to Kunawarritji Aboriginal community in more recent years, where she continues to live today. There she was taught to paint by renowned artists Nora Nungabar (Nyangapa) (dec.) and Nora Wompi (dec.). The three women painted together as often as possible. For a long time Bugai wove baskets, watching the other women painting. Later, she explained that she had been uncertain how to begin.



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Today Bugai is known as a master of colour, gesture and subtlety. Her self-reflective works are layered with distinctively delicate brush marks, with subtle colour changes representing landmarks, water sources, and desert flora. Bugai's work was selected for the 2019, 2018 and 2013 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, the 2012 Bankwest Contemporary Art Prize and Hedland Art Award, and the 2010 Western Australian Indigenous Art Award. Bugai won the 'General Painting' award at the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Art Award in 2021. She has held regular solo exhibitions, and her work has been acquired by several major institutions in Australia, including The National Museum of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, and Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art.

Solo Exhibitions

2023	Tamanthi 2023 – Art Gallery of South Australia
2023	Ngayu Bugai (I am Bugai), Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin, NT
2022	Bugai Whyoulter, Survey Exhibition (2015 – 2021) Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2019	Bugai, The Goods Shed, Claremont, WA
2011	Jartijiti (33) Bugai Whyoulter, Seva Frangos Art, Perth, WA
2010	Bugai Whyoulter, Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, NSW

Group Exhibitions

2024	Following in Footsteps, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2024	How To Swim, Edwina Corlette, New Farm, QLD
2023	Paper Wangka (Paper Story), Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, VIC
2023	Desert Mob 2023 – Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2023	TDF Collect Presents: "Martumili Artists" – Collingwood, VIC
2023	Crossing Country, Artija Fine Art Gallery, South Fremantle, WA
2023	Le Chant Aborigene des Sept Soeurs, IDAIA, Paris, France
2023	Songlines - Centres d'art du desert australien, IDAIA/ Australian Embassy, Paris, France
2022	Rawa - A long time, Aboriginal Contemporary, Sydney, NSW
2022	Waru (Fire), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2022	Nyinani (Staying put), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2022	Paper Wangka (paper story)
2022	Tracks We Share, Art Gallery of Western Australia (curated by FORM), Perth WA
2021	Martumili Mob, The Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA
2021	Paper Wangka (Paper Story), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2021	Pukurlpa (happy inside), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2020	Martumili Ngurra - Our Country, Aboriginal Contemporary, Bronte, NSW
2020	Belonging to Martu, Harvey Arts Project, Idaho, US



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2020	Ngurra Means Home, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2020	Strong Country, Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin, NT
2020	Matriarchs 2020, Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin, NT
2020	I know my country, Artitja Fine Art Gallery, Perth, WA
2020	Living Water, Aboriginal Contemporary, Waverley NSW
2020	Kujungka- Young and Old Together, Aboriginal Signature, Brussels, Belgium
2020	Contemporary Desert Art, Dellasposa, London, UK
2019	Punmukarti!, Yaama Gaanu, Moree NSW
2019	Nyumma (burnt Country), Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin NT
2018	Hedland Art Award, The Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA
2018	Wantili - Bugai & Cyril Whyolter, 2018
2018	Warla Tuwa, Aboriginal Contemporary, Bronte NSW
2018	Martuku Ninti (Martu Knowledge), Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne VIC
2018	Pujiman, Martumili Artists and Spinifex Hill Artists, Port Hedland Courthouse Gallery, WA
2018	Voice of the custodians of the Homeland: Martumili, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Bruxelles
2017	Hedland Art Award, The Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA
2017	Art at the Heart, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	Desert Mob, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT
2017	Community Life, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	After The Rains, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	Flight: Aboriginal Perspectives from the Sky, FORM Gallery, Perth
2017	Women of Martu, Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2016	Three Deserts Singing
2016	Martumili Artists – Nyliangkurr
2016	Desert Mob
2016	Hedland Art Award
2016	August 33: Wompi Bugai Nungabar
2016	January Summer Salon and Art Parade
2015	Palya, Martumili Artists, Tjarlirli Art and Warakurna Artists
2015	Leading Ladies
2015	Tamanthi
2015	Desert Mob
2015	Martumili Artists
2015	Pukurlpa - Good Inside
2015	Together as One Martu - Art from the far Western Desert
2015	The Summer Collectors Show 2015
2014	Martumili
2014	Martu Art From the Western Desert
2014	Desert Mob
2014	Malya Yuturringu; be a star



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2014	Right Now
2013	Salon des Refuses, Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin
2013	Ngayunlu-laju partumparakula kujungka: Old people painting together
2013	Painting It Martu Way, Art Mob, Hobart
2013	Selected works by the Martumili Artists, Raft Artspace, Alice Springs
2013	The Great Sandy Desert, Yaama Ganu Gallery, Moree
2012	We Don't Need A Map: a Martu experience of the Western Desert
2012	Martumili Artists 2012, Merenda Gallery, Perth
2012	Deserts & Rivers, FORM Gallery, Perth
2012	Desert Mob, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs
2012	Warla: an explanation of the salt lakes in the Great Sandy Desert, Short Street Gallery, Broome
2012	Martumili Artists Recent Works, William Mora Gallery, Melbourne
2012	Martumili Artists at Art Mob, Art Mob, Hobart
2011	Yiwarra Kuju – One Road, One People, Perth Convention Exhibition Centre, Perth
2011	Yiwarra Kuju – One Road, One People, Australian Museum, Sydney
2011	Waru! Holding Fire in Australias Western Desert, Thomas Welton Gallery, Stanford University, San Francisco
2011	Green, Outstation, Darwin
2011	Martumili Artists, Outback Fusion Festival, Newman
2011	Jakulpa laju karyinpa (Bringing a message), Chapman Gallery, Canberra
2010	Shalom Gamarada Nginyani Yana (We walk together as friends), Waterhole Art, Sydney
2010	Warla Tjartjal (Edge of the Lake), Short Street Gallery, Broome
2010	Yiwarra Kuju – One Road, One People, National Museum of Australia, Canberra 2010 January Martumili Group Exhibition, Redot Art Gallery, Singapore
2009	Desert Mob, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs
2009	Yankuni laju kamkani kujungka (We are travelling together by air), Red Dot Gallery, Singapore
2009	Warranpalampaju kayili yaninpa (Our Country travelling north), Raft Art Space, Darwin
2009	Wangka-Lampaju (Our Story), Randell Lane Gallery, Perth
2009	Warranpalampa (Our Country), William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
2008	Ngurra waltja wakarni (We are painting country), Short St Gallery, Broome
2008	Martumili Artists Recent Works, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
2008	Jitirangu (Rainbow), Randell Lane Gallery, Perth
2008	Laltu tujuparaku, yulpalpa yimaparaku (Lots of women, little bit men), Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney



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Collections

Art Gallery Of Western Australia
Gallery Of Modern Art, Queensland Art Gallery
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection Of The University Of Virginia
National Gallery Of Victoria
National Museum Of Australia

Awards

2022	Finalist, Hadleys Art Prize
2021	Best Painting, 38 th Telstra NATSIAA Awards
2019	Finalist, 36th Telstra NATSIAA Awards
2018	Finalist, 35th Telstra NATSIAA Awards
2013	Finalist, Glencore Art Centre Award
2013	Finalist, 29th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award
2012	Finalist, Hedland Art Award
2012	Finalist, Bankwest Contemporary Art Prize Awards
2010	Finalist, Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards