

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 Pukayiyirna, 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 Pinyirr Nancy Patterson (dec.), and extended family, primarily travelling around the eastern side of the Karlamilyi (Rudall River) region and along the mid-section 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 Parnngurr before relocating to Kunawarritji Aboriginal community, where she



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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 before she began painting, Bugai wove baskets as she observed her friends painting. Later, she explained that she had been uncertain how to begin. Today Bugai is considered one of the most established Martumili Artists, and 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. In 2023 and 2024, Bugai was a finalist in Australia's most prestigious Indigenous art exhibition, the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA), and in 2021 she was the NATSIAA recipient of the highly lauded 'General Painting Award'.

Bugai 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 Tarnanthi 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



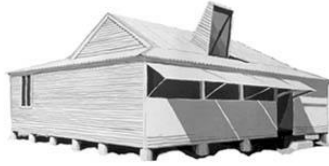
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- 2022 Waru (Fire), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
- 2022 Nyinani (Staying put), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
- 2022 Paper Wangka (paper story)
- 2022 Tracks We Share, Art Gallery of Western Australia (curated by FORM), Perth WA
- 2021 Martumili Mob, 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
- 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 Nyurnma (burnt Country), Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin NT
- 2018 Hedland Art Award, The Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA
- 2018 Wantili - Bugai & Cyril Whyoulter, 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



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- 2015 Palya, Martumili Artists, Tjarlirli Art and Warakurna Artists
- 2015 Leading Ladies
- 2015 Tarnanthi
- 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
- 2014 Right Now
- 2013 Salon des Refuses, Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin
- 2013 Ngayunlu-laju parturnparakula 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 kartyinpa (Bringing a message), Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- 2010 Shalom Gamarada Ngiyani Yana (We walk together as friends), Waterhole Art, Sydney
- 2010 Warla Tjartrjal (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



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- 2009 Yankuni laju karnkani 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 yirnaparaku (Lots of women, little bit men), Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney

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, 38th 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