



# Short St. Gallery



## Helen Dale Samson

**Born** 1943  
**Language Group** Warnman  
**Region** East Pilbara, WA

"I been painting in Jigalong long time. I've been working at the school there. Take the kids to school. Long time I been working there and at Punmu school, yeah for the kids, yeah long me. I been working and I tell a story for the children.

Now I learn [to paint] myself. I do it myself. I been do drawing, nice colours and then think, think, think. Thinking in my head. And thinking what I can draw with. Just draw it first and do it slowly like that, yeah? Yuwayi (yes)." - Helen Dale Samson

Helen Dale Samson is a Warnman woman and custodian of the Karlamilyi (Rudall River) region, where her family travelled during the pujiman (traditional, desert dwelling) era. She is the youngest sister of fellow Martumili Artists Jatarr Lily Long and Wurta Amy French, but unlike her sisters, she was born in Jigalong Mission and has no memory of her parents. Her family had decided to relocate to the mission in order to be reunited with family members that had already moved in from the desert, and to access an assured supply of rationed food. Dale grew up in the mission dormitory, schooling and working during the week, but spent her weekends and holidays camping in the Country surrounding Jigalong and Puntawarri with her extended family. Once married, Dale lived around Puntawarri and Ngayakurlu rockholes, walking and hunting there. Later, like many Martu, she worked at various stations around the Pilbara, including



# Short St. Gallery

Mundawindi (Mundiwin) and Sylvania Stations. In more recent years Dale returned to Jigalong Aboriginal community, where she continues to live today with her children and grandchildren. Dale has established a reputation as a dedicated and innovative painter and weaver. She paints about the old mission days and the places she and her ancestors travelled, along with their associated Jukurpa (Dreaming) stories. Dale's vibrant paintings meld a naive Western style with unique, textured motifs and multiple perspectival views of her Country. She is particularly adept at describing the gorgeous array of flora that covers Martu Country, abstracting flowers and trees into beautiful patterns.

Helen Dale Samson is a Warman woman and custodian of the Karlamilyi (Rudall River) region, where her family travelled during the pujiman (traditional, desert dwelling) era. She is the youngest sister of fellow Martumili Artists Jatarr Lily Long and Wurta Amy French, but unlike her sisters, she was born in Jigalong Mission and has no memory of her parents. Her family had decided to relocate to the mission in order to be reunited with family members that had already moved in from the desert, and to access an assured supply of rationed food. Dale grew up in the mission dormitory, schooling and working during the week, but spent her weekends and holidays camping in the Country surrounding Jigalong and Puntawarri with her extended family. Once married, Dale lived around Puntawarri and Ngayakurlu rockholes, walking and hunting there. Later, like many Martu, she worked at various stations around the Pilbara, including Mundawindi (Mundiwin ) and Sylvania Stations. In more recent years Dale returned to Jigalong Aboriginal community, where she continues to live today with her children and grandchildren.

Dale has established a reputation as a dedicated and innovative painter and weaver. She paints about the old mission days and the places she and her ancestors travelled, along with their associated Jukurpa (Dreaming) stories. Dale's vibrant paintings meld a naive Western style with unique, textured motifs and multiple perspectival views of her Country. She is particularly adept at describing the gorgeous array of flora that covers Martu Country, abstracting flowers and trees into beautiful patterns.

## Group Exhibitions

2025	Next Generation
2024	Following in Footsteps, Martumili Gallery, Newman WA
2023	Represent   Part 1, Aboriginal Figurative Practice in Western Australia, FORM Gallery, Perth, WA
2023	Paper Wangka (Paper Story), Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, Vic
2023	Desert Mob 2023, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs
2023	Mirrka (bushfoods), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2023	Songlines - Centres dart du desert australien, IDAIA/ Australian Embassy, Paris, France
2022	Nyinani (Staying put) Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2022	Paper Wangka (paper story), works on Paper from Martumili Artists



# Short St. Gallery

2022	Tracks We Share, Art Gallery of Western Australia (curated by FORM)
2021	Paper Wangka (Paper Story), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2021	Pukuripa (happy inside), Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2020	Jury Art Awards Exhibition, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA
2020	What Now? The Good Shed, Claremont, WA
2020	Ngurra Means Home, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2019	Punmukarti!, Yaama Gaanu, Moree NSW
2018	Warla Tuwa, Aboriginal Contemporary, Bronte NSW
2017	Art at the Heart, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	Community Life, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	After the Rains, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	After The Rains, Martumili Gallery, Newman, WA
2017	Revealed Emerging Aboriginal artists from Western Australia, Fremantle Arts Centre
2017	Flight: Aboriginal Perspectives from the Sky, FORM Gallery, Perth
2017	Flight: Aboriginal perspectives from the sky, FORM, Perth WA
2015	Pukuripa - Good Inside, Yaama Ganu Gallery, Moree, NSW
2014	Desert Mob, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs, NT
2014	Right Now, Boomalli Gallery, Leichardt, Vic
2013	Salon des Refuses, Paul Johnstone Gallery, Darwin
2013	Martumili Art Show, Newman Visitors Centre, Newman
2013	A Study of the Figurative in Desert Painting, Short Street Gallery, Broome
2013	Revealed: emerging Aboriginal artists from Western Australia, Gallery Central, Perth
2012	We Don't Need A Map: a Martu experience of the Western Desert
2012	Martumili Artists 2012, Merenda Gallery, Perth
2009	Puntu kurnu (Belongs to the people), Newman Visitors Centre, Newman
2008	Martumili Artists, Port Hedland Courthouse Arts Centre and Gallery
2008	Revealed Exhibition, Central TAFE Art Gallery, Perth