



MANGKAJA



08 91915272; mangkaja.arts@bigpond.com; www.mangkaja.com

Wakartu Cory Surprise



Skin: Nyapana

Language: Walmajarri

Country: Pirmal, Great Sandy Desert

DOB: 1 / 7 / 29



I was born at Tapu in the Great Sandy desert around 1929. Tapu is my father's country and Kurtal is my mother's country. My parents died when I was a baby. I grew up at Wayampajarti and that is my country now. I don't remember my mummy or daddy. They passed away in the desert. When I was crawling my sister-in-law Trixie took me to Christmas Creek. I was promised to one old man who had two wives. We had no clothes when we went in. We were frightened of the Station Manager so we ran away from that place. Two times we ran away to the desert.

I walked out from the bush as a young woman with my two brothers. We were living at Wayampajarti and around that country there. At Wayampajarti there is a *jila* [permanent waterhole] where *Kalpartu* [an ancestral snake] lives. When we lived out in the bush we learnt the law. We learnt where the water is, where our country is and where to find food. You have to be careful not to go to the wrong places because you might make the *Kalpartu* [spirit snake] angry or them other ones like *Kukurr*, *Murungkurr*, *Parlangan*. You could make other people angry too. You need permission to go to other people's country.

I went to the desert with my husband to look for *kumanjayi* [deceased] Pijaju out there, then we all came back for ceremony. My husband did contract work building fences. I followed him on those contracts. I worked as a camp cook. I cooked food for big mobs of people. I cleaned, cooked and milked goats. We worked at Quanbun Downs, Jubilee Station, Yiyili and Cherrabun Station. Then I lived mainly at one place, GoGo Station (near Fitzroy Crossing) until I was old. I came to Fitzroy Crossing in the 1950s. I have a big mob of kids and some of them have passed away now.

I first started painting at Karrayili Adult Education Centre in the early eighties. We told our stories through painting and learned to speak to *kartiya* [European person]. I also did painting at Bayulu community near Fitzroy Crossing. That's how I told my story to *kartiya*. We worked on paper then, not canvas or board.



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When I paint, I think about my country, and where I have been travelling across that country. I paint from here (points to head - thinking about country) and here (points to breasts, collarbone and shoulder blades - which is a reference to body painting). I think about my people, the old people and what they told me and *jumangkarni* [Dreamtime]. When I paint I am thinking about law from a long time ago. I like painting, it's good. I get *pamarr* [word for rock, stone money] for it. I can buy my food, tyres and fix my car. I give some money to my family and I keep some for myself.

Nobody taught me how to paint, I put down my own ideas. I saw these places for myself, I went there with the old people. I paint *jilji* [sand hills], *jumu* [soak water], *jila* [permanent waterhole], *jiwari* [rock hole], *pamarr* [hills and rock country], I think about *mangarri* [vegetable food] and *kuyu* [game] from my country and when I was there.

PAINTING THEMES:

Ngarrankarni [Dreamtime] stories

Parrjalpartu [mother and father's country]

Mayita [mother and brother's country]

Tapu *jila* [permanent waterhole]

Features in the landscapes: *pamarr* [hills and rock country] in Wayampajarti country; *jila* [permanent waterhole] from Wayampajarti and surrounding country; *jilajiwari* [rockholes]; one main ceremonial *jiwari* [rock hole] in Wayampajarti; *Jilji* [sanddunes] from Wayampajarti and surrounding country.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2007: *Wakartu Cory Surprise*

Silvershot Gallery Raft Artspace,
Melbourne, VIC

2006: *Wakartu Cory Surprise: New Works*

Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT

2006: *Wakartu Cory Surprise*

Silvershot Gallery Raft Artspace,
Melbourne, VIC

2006: *Mangkaja Arts Presents
Wakartu Cory Surprise*

Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT

2005: *Cory and Friends*

ReDot Gallery, Singapore

2004: *Wakartu Cory Surprise*

Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney, NSW

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2009: *Mangkaja Artists 60x60*

Randell Lane Fine Art, WA

2009: *Sharing Difference on Common Ground*

Holmes a Court Gallery, Perth, WA and
Kimberley Aboriginal Artists

2009: *26th Telstra National Aboriginal &
Torres Strait Islander Art Award*

Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory
Alison Kelly Gallery, VIC

2009: *Wakartu Cory Surprise*

Seymour College, Glen Osmond, SA

2009: *Celebrating Country: Kinship and Culture*

Caspary Conference Centre,
University of NSW

2009: *Shalom Gamarada*

2009: *Western Australian Indigenous Art Award*

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA

2009: *Sitting Down with Jukuja & Wakartu*

RAFT Artspace, Darwin, NT

2009: *Senior Artists from Fitzroy Crossing*

Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane, QLD

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GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Mangkaja Survey Show*
 2008: *The Other Thing: a survey show*
 2008: *Wet n' Wild*
 2008: *Mangkaja Arts*
 2008: *Marnintu Maparnana [Women Painting]*
 2008: *The Canning Stock Route Project*
- 2008: *Shalom Gamarad*
- 2008: *Mangkaja Artists WA*
 2008: *25th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*
 2008: *Divas of the Desert*
 2008: *Waterholes and Bush Tucker*
 2008: *Women On Country*
 2008: *Bendi Lango*
- 2007: *X Marks the Spot*
 2007: *Jila, Jilji and Miyi*
 2007: *Salt Water Fresh Water*
 2007: *Women Artists of Fitzroy Crossing*
 2007: *Mangkaja Arts – Fitzroy Crossing*
 2007: *24th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*
 2007: *Palya Art in Melbourne*
 2007: *Bendi Lango*
- 2006: *Mona Chugana & Cory Surprise*
 2006: *Depth & Divergence*
 2006: *Mangkaja Group Show*
 2005: *True Colours - Recent works from Fitzroy Crossing*
 2005: *Surprise; Cory & Friends*
 2005: *Mangkaja Group Show*
 2005: *Colourfields*
 2005: *Too Much Good Work*
 2005: *22nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*
 2004/05: *Colour Power: Aboriginal Art Post 1984*
 2004: *This is Still My Country: 10 Years On*
 2004: *Ngurrara Canvas*
- 2004: *Wakartu Cory Surprise & Widjee Henry*
 2004: *Over the Top*
- Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
 Charles Darwin University Art Collection, NT
 Artkelch, Freiburg, Germany
 A P Bond Art Dealer, Adelaide, SA
 ReDot Gallery, Singapore
 Beijing International Olympic Committee Expo, China
 Caspary Conference Centre, University of NSW
 Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
 Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory
 Gallery Gondwana, Sydney, NSW
 Bridget McDonnell Hampton Gallery, VIC
 Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane
 The Indigenous Scholarship Fund, Sydney and Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
 Wooloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane
 Cool Art Gallery, Coolum Beach, QLD
 Central TAFE Art Gallery, Northbridge, WA
 Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
 ARTKELCH, Germany
- Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory
 The Barn, Melbourne, VIC
 The Indigenous Scholarship Fund, Sydney and Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
 Short St Gallery, Broome, WA
 Cullity Gallery, UWA, Perth, WA
 Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney, WA
 Queensland College of Art Gallery, Griffith University, QLD
 ReDot Gallery, Singapore
 Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
 Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs NT
 Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT
- Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Perth International Arts Festival, Artplace, WA
 Perth Concert Hall,
 Perth International Arts Festival, WA
 Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
 Fremantle Art Centre, Perth, WA

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GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2003: *Mangkaja Women*

2003: *Jila, Jumu, Jiwari & Wirrkujia*

2003: *Fitzroy Fusions*

2002: *Group Show*

2002: *Recent works from Mangkaja Arts*

2002: *Short on Size*

2001: *Ngurrara Canvas*

2001: *Mangkaja Arts Ten Years On - Mangkaja's
10 Year Anniversary Show*

2001: *Fitzroy Women*

2001: *Short on Size*

2000: *Noumea-Pacifique 2000*

2000: *Short on Size*

2000: *Past modern, Australia Square*

1999: *Ngurrara*

1999: *Short on Size*

1998: *Group Show*

1997: *14th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres
Strait Islander Art Award*

1997: *Group Show*

1996: *Group Show*

1995: *Group Show*

1995: *Kimberley Art*

1995: *12th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islander Art Award*

1994: *Ngajakura Ngurrara Minyarti:
This is My Country*

1993: *Images of Power*

1993: *Mangkaja Women*

1992: *Group Show*

1991: *Karrayili*

Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT

University of Western Australia

Cullity Gallery, Perth, WA

Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT

Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

National Gallery of Australia, ACT

Tandanya, Adelaide, SA

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

Biennale D'Art Contemporain de Noumea

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

Short St Gallery, Sydney, NSW

Japingka Gallery, Fremantle, WA

Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London

Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory

Hogarth Gallery, Sydney, NSW

Hogarth Gallery, Sydney, NSW

Australian Perspectives Gallery,

Brisbane, QLD

Melbourne, VIC

National Tour

Festival Of Perth Exhibition, Artplace, WA

National Gallery of Victoria

Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth, WA

Hogarth Gallery, Sydney, NSW

Tandanya, National Aboriginal

Cultural Institute, Adelaide, SA

AWARDS:

2009: *Western Australian Premier's Indigenous Art Award*
Winner of the 'WA \$10,000 Artist' Award

2008: *25th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*
Highly commended

1997: *14th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*
Winner of the 'Telstra Work on Paper' Award

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COLLECTIONS:

National Museum of Australia
National Gallery of Australia
National Gallery of Victoria
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Charles Darwin University
Steve Luzco Collection, San Francisco, USA
Sammlung Alison and Peter W Klein Collection, Germany
Laverty Collection
HBL Collection, Melbourne
Harriett and Richard England Collection
Fitzroy Crossing High School
Fitzroy Crossing Hospital

PUBLIC ART:

2009: Broome Prison - Panel design project
2008: Fitzroy Valley Education Centre – panel project
2008: Fitzroy Hospital - Wall design project, paintings on canvas, nursebase floor design

PUBLICATIONS:

2009: Kimberley Aboriginal Artists
Sharing Difference on Common Ground

2009: Collections australiennes contemporaines du musee des Confluences
Aborigenes

2009: Deutscher and Hackett, 25 March
Important Aboriginal Art

2009: Collaborations - Wakartu Cory Surprise and Ildiko Kovacs
Australian Aboriginal Art

2007: Art Gallery NSW
One Sun One Moon, Aboriginal Art in Australia

2006: Art Gallery of Western Australia
Western Desert Satellites: Works from the Western Australian State Art Collection

2004: National Gallery of Victoria
Colour Power: Aboriginal art post 1984

2003: Exhibition catalogue
Cullity Gallery UWA Perth / Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency
Martuwarra and Jila, Jumu, Jiwari and Wirrukuja

2003: New Yorker Magazine July 28
The Painted Desert the Fate of an Aboriginal Masterpiece

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PUBLICATIONS/FILMS:

- 2002: Pat Lowe
Hunters and Trackers of the Australian Desert
- 2000: Oxford University Press & ANU
Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture / Ngurrara Entry
- 2000: National Aboriginal Cultural Institute - Tandanya
Painting Up Big, The Ngurrara Canvas
- 2001: Kent Town, S. Aust. Wakefield Press in association with the National Aboriginal Cultural Institute - Tandanya
Kaltja now: Indigenous Arts Australia
- 2000: IATSI Canberra
Karrayili: The History of Karrayili Adult Education Centre
- 1998: Video Documentary / SBS Television
Jila Painted Waters of the Great Sandy Desert
- 1996: Karrayili Adult Education Centre and Mangkaja Arts exhibition catalogue
Minyarti Wangki NgaJukura Ngurrarajangka [This Is The Word From My Country]
- 1994: Exhibition Catalogue
Ngajakura Ngurrara Minyarti [This Is My Country]
- 1994: The Art Gallery of NSW
Yiribana: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collection
- 1993: Exhibition catalogue, Fremantle Art Centre
Mangkaja Women
- 1993: National Gallery of Victoria
Images of Power: Aboriginal Art of the Kimberleys
- 1991: Exhibition catalogue, Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide
Karrayili: Ten Years On
- 1991: Exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery Of New South Wales
Aboriginal women