



# Nyarapayi Giles

Born in 1940, Gibson Desert, Western Australia. Passed away in 2019.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Nyarapayi Giles, a Ngaanyatjarra woman, began painting on canvas while settled in Patjarr Community, when the modern Desert Art Movement sprung from Papunya Tula and gained astounding momentum in the 1970s. She has been described as a “first contact” woman as her youth was lived nomadically in the Gibson Desert. Giles painted between various communities in Ngaanyatjarra lands until 2006 when Tjarlirli Art was established in the Tjukurla community. Tjukurla lies between Kintore and Kaltukatjara (Docker River) resting on the banks of saltwater Lake Hopkins, its surrounding landscape bearing sandhills, claypans and desert oak trees. Karrku, where Giles was born, is an important cultural site associated with the Karlaya Tjukurrpa (Emu Dreaming) in which emus are rumoured to have gone digging in the local ochre deposit for the fine-grained powder that, when combined with water, transforms into a red, sanguineous substance. Red ochre, such as that found at Karrku, holds ceremonial weight, used in initiative body painting and later by artists on canvas.

The deep knowledge Giles possesses of these ancestral histories is evidenced by her work. Her large concentric circles in fluorescent hues, interlaced by poised dot work, and partnered by auxiliary lines and arcs can be understood as picturing the location of the ochre pits and sand dunes in Ngaanyatjarra Country. Giles’ canvases are striking due to her bold use of warring pigments: tawny reds, brilliant azul and ultramarine, deep grey, feathery cream, brick pink and Atlantic green. In juxtaposition, these colours unite in kaleidoscopic and sensational masterpieces. Dallas Gold, who launched the seminal exhibition *The Wild Ones* at RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs in 2013 with a selection of Giles’ canvases included, celebrated the artist for her unusual capacity to do away with the “soft aesthetic” common to “painting by a desert woman.”

Giles is widely acknowledged as one of the leading artists who brought international attention to painting from Ngaanyatjarra Country. One of her first canvases for Tjarlirli Art was a finalist in the 2008 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (NATSIAA) and awarded First Prize in the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Art Award that same year. Giles’ posthumous reputation continues to develop with more recent exhibitions of her works in London.

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## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
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## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Revelation & Concealment*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2021 *Tjarlirli Rocks*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2020 *Tjukurla Masters*, Yaamaganu Gallery, Moree, New South Wales, Australia
- 2020 *Rawa Titungarala*, Artsource, Freemantle, Western Australia, Australia
- 2020 *I Know My Country*, Artitja Fine Art Gallery, South Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia
- 2020 *Merry-Go-Round*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2019 *The Women’s Show*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2018 *Summer Salon*, RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2018 *Desert Mob 2018*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2018 *Salon des Refuses*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2018 *Geelong Contemporary Art Prize*, Geelong Gallery, Geelong, Victoria, Australia
- 2018 *Albany Art Prize*, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, Western Australia, Australia
- 2018 *The Women’s Show*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Australia
- 2017 *Ng Salon*, RAFT Artspace in association with Hanging Valley, praxis ARTSPACE, Bowden, South Australia, Australia

- 2017 *Ngurra: Home on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands*, South Australia Museum, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
- 2017 *Hedland Art Awards*, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, Western Australia, Australia
- 2017 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2017 *Minyma Mayatja*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2017 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2017 *Tjukurla Tjukurrpa*, Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- 2017 *The Women's Show*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2017 *Wala Wingki*, Raft South, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia
- 2016 *Who's Afraid of Colour*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2016 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2016 *Salon Des Refuses*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2016 *Hedland Art Awards*, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, Western Australia, Australia
- 2016 *Power, Colour, Story*, Harvey Art Projects, Ketchum, Idaho, USA
- 2016 *Pro Community* (touring exhibition), Art Kelch, Rheinstetten, Germany
- 2016 *Palya*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2015 *Tarnanthi Festival*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
- 2015 Tunbridge Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2015 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2015 *Port Hedland Art Awards*, Finalist, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, Western Australia, Australia
- 2015 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2015 *Recent Works from Tjarlirli Art*, RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2015 *Western Desert Mob - Paintings from Tjarlirli and Warakurna*, Harvey Art Projects, Ketchum, Idaho, USA
- 2014 *Warakurna Art and Tjarlirli Art*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2014 *Salon des Refuses*, Outstation Gallery, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2014 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2014 *Our Home In Colour*, Outstation Gallery, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2014 *Living Spirit*, Marshall Arts, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
- 2013 *The Wild Ones*, RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2013 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2013 *Ngaanpurinytjulahu Tirtu Palyapayi (We Always Do It Like This)*, Harvey Art Projects, USA
- 2013 *Salon des Refuses*, Outstation Gallery, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2013 *Tjarlirli Art: In Profile*, Marshall Arts, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
- 2012 *Way Out West*, RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2011 *Watch Me And Learn*, Aboriginal and Pacific Art Gallery, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- 2011 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2010 William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2010 Merenda Gallery, Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia
- 2009 *Western Desert Mob: New Prints*, Nomad Art, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2009 *Walka Putitja*, Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2009 Chapman Gallery, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia
- 2009 *Desert Mob*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2009 *Seniors and Emerging*, Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River, Western Australia, Australia
- 2009 *Tjukurpa Pulkajarra*, South Australian Museum, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
- 2008 Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2007 *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2007 *Big Country*, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2007 William Mora Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2007 *Sir Charles Gairdner Art Prize*, Charles Gairdner Hospital, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2005 Meeniyana Art Gallery, Meeniyana, Victoria, Australia
- 2004 *Fibre Sculpture*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

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## COLLECTIONS

Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, Florida, USA

Araluen Arts Centre Collection, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia

British Museum Collection, London, United Kingdom  
City of Joondalup Collection, Joondalup, Western Australia, Australia  
Richard and Harriet England Private Collection  
Patrick Corrigan Private Collection  
Sir Charles Gairdner Collection  
Swift-Lagerburg Collection  
W&V McGeoch Collection  
Queensland Art Gallery Collection, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia  
Charles Darwin University Collection, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia  
National Gallery of Victoria Collection, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia  
Araluen Art Collection, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia  
South Australian Museum, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia  
HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco Private Collection

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## **ART PRIZES AND AWARDS**

- 2018 Finalist, Geelong Contemporary Art Prize, Geelong Gallery, Geelong, Victoria, Australia
- 2018 Finalist, Albany Art Prize, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, Western Australia, Australia
- 2017 Finalist, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2017 Finalist, Hedland Art Awards, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, Western Australia, Australia
- 2016 Finalist, Hedland Art Awards, Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, Western Australia, Australia
- 2015 Finalist, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

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