



Phyllis Thomas

Born in 1933, Riyarr, Turner River, Pilbara Region WA, Australia. Passed away in 2018.

BIOGRAPHY

Phyllis Thomas was born at a place called Riyarr on the Turner River, south east of Purnululu. When young she worked on Turner Station looking after poultry, gardening, grinding salt and carting water from the well. However she often preferred to run away into the bush with the old women to hunt, collect dingo scalps and look for gold. Phyllis is a Gija woman of Nagarra skin, whose bush name, Booljoongali, means 'big rain coming down with lots of wind'.

She began painting when Freddie Timms set up the Jirrawun Aboriginal Arts group in 1998. Her work achieved almost immediate success, depicting Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) places and bush tucker from Roogoon (Crocodile Hole) area as well as the country around the middle reaches of the Ord and Turner Rivers where she was born. Phyllis was represented in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) in 1999 with a stunning picture of Boornbem Goorlem, Hot Water Spring II.

Her work has been acquired by a number of collectors and galleries including a special focus purchase of five paintings by the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) in 2000. Her painting *The Escape* was highly commended in the seventeenth NATSIAA in 2000, and was purchased as part of the Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory's Telstra Collection. An eight panel series on the same subject was shown at Raft Artspace in Darwin in 2002 and was purchased by AGWA in 2003.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Revelation & Concealment*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2018 Wynne Prize Finalist, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- 2017 *Spiritual Essence of the Earth with Warmun Artists*, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
- 2017 *For the Women*, Tandanya, Adelaide, Australia
- 2016 *Telling Tales: Excursions in narrative form*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, Australia
- 2015 *Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning*, Short Street Gallery, Broome, Australia
- 2014 *Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2014 *Warmun: Gija Contemporary Art of Western Australia*, Harvey Art Projects, USA
- 2014 *Warmun Aboriginal Art*, Art Images Gallery, Adelaide, Australia
- 2013 *Nagarra & Naangari*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2012 *Earth: Ochre Painting from Warmun*, Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2011 *Where Knowledge Comes From*, Gadfly Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2011 *(Re) - Currents of Warrambany*, Gecko Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2010 *Ochres of the Kimberley*, Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River, Western Australia, Australia
- 2010 *Surface of Our Dreaming*, Paintings by Gija Women - Chapman Gallery, Canberra, Australia
- 2010 *Warmun - Our Earth Our Story*, Art Images Gallery, Norwood, Australia
- 2010 *Putipula Gallery*, Noosa, Queensland, Australia
- 2010 *Big Country*, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2010 Framed Gallery, Darwin, Northern, Australia
- 2009 *Warmun Ochres: Rich Earth*, Gadfly Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2007 Warmun Snapshot, Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2007 *Dog Dreamings*, Seva Frangos Art, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2006 *Bungle Bungles*, Short St. Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2006 *Warmun Arts*, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, Western Australia, Australia
- 2005 *Warmun Women's Show*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2005 *Gija: Across The Border*, Raft Artspace, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2005 *Warmun Group Show*, Framed Gallery, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2005 *Waterhole Country*, Short St. Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia

- 2005 *New Work From Warmun*, Gadfly Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
2004 *Big Country Show*, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
2002 *Warmun Group Show*, Flinders University Art Museum, Southern Australia, Australia
2001 *Beyond Wings*, Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, Southern Australia, Australia
2001 *Short on Size*, Short St. Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
2001 *Ochres*, Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
2001 *New Paintings from Warmun Art Centre*, Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
2000 *The Seventeenth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Darwin, Australia
1999 *My Country*, Northern Territory University, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
1999 *New Art from the Kimberley*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
1999 *The Seventeenth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Darwin, Australia
1998 *Jirrawun Artists*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
1998 *Jirrawun Artists from Crocodile Hole*, Gemma Stowe, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
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AWARDS

- 2015 32nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award
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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1996 *Ngalangangpum Jarrakpu Purrurn: Mother and Child*, Margaret Stewart, Magabala Books, Broome, Australia

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