

Wakartu Ngarralja Tommy May
Skin: Jungkurra
Language: Walmajarri
Country: Yarrnkurnja
DOB: 1 / 1 / 35

Story

Ngarralja is a Wangkajunga/Walmajarri man. He was born at Yarrnkurnja, in the Great Sandy Desert and he was taught how to hunt and kill his own meat before he had any contact with kartiya (Europeans).

He is now referred to as Karrayili which means middle aged person. He is not yet an elder but he has been given the job of spokesman by his old people. He is fluent in both Wangkatjungka and Walmajarri languages as well as English. He also writes Walmajarri. He was one of the first people to start up the Karrayili Adult Education centre because he wanted to learn to read and write his own language and English.

He is an important person for art and culture in Fitzroy Crossing and was the Chairman of Mangkaja in the past. Tommy May is currently an executive member for the Association of Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA). He dances and sings Kurtal, a ceremony relating to a main jila (living waterhole) in his country. He is also a painter and printmaker.

He lives with his wife and nine children at Mindi Radi Community in Fitzroy Crossing.

Exhibition History

Solo

2007 Jilji Jaa Marrtuwarra (with Dorothy May) Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne

Group

2009 Luka (Mud) with Dorothy May Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne
2008 More than a few good men Woolloongabba Gallery, Brisbane
2007 Lau Lau Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
2006 Impressions 2006. Limited edition prints by leading contemporary artists Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
2005 Surprise ;Cory & Friends "Too much good work" Red Dot Gallery, Singapore
 Raft Artspace, Darwin
2004 This is Still My Country: Ngurrara Canvas Artplace, Perth
 Perth Concert Hall, Perth International Arts Festival
2003 Jila, Jumu, Jiwari & Wirrkuja University of Western Australia
 Murrkunkura Ngarrangkarnijangka Raft Artspace Darwin
 Ngurrara: Three men's countries from the Dreamtime
2002 Native Title Business Contemporary Indigenous Art National Travelling Exhibition
 The 16th Asian International Art Exhibition Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou, China
 Group Show Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
2001 Ngurrara Canvas National Gallery of Australia
 Mangkaja Arts Ten Years Tandanya, Adelaide
 On Mangkaja's 10 year Anniversary Show
 18th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
 Impressions! An exhibition of prints Group Show Coomalie Culture Centre / Batchelor NT
 Australian Print Workshop Gallery, Melbourne
2000 Fremantle Print Award Fremantle Art Centre
 People in a Landscape: Cultural Centre of the Philippines, Manila

- Contemporary Australian Prints
 Proof Positive Gold Treasury Museum, Melbourne
 Cutting Comments: Silk Cut Award travelling exhibition
 Contemporary Lino cut Prints 1995-98
- 1999** Story Boards: Fremantle Art Centre
 Ceramic tiles from the Kimberley
- 1998** Group Show Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London
- 1997** Heritage Commission Art Award Old Parliament House Canberra
- 1996** Fremantle Print Award Fremantle Art Centre
 National Aboriginal and Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin
 Torres Strait Islander Art Award
 Heritage Commission Art Award Old Parliament House Canberra
 Mangkaja Paperworks Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide
- 1995** National Aboriginal and Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin
 Torres Strait Islander Art Award Selected to tour nationally with the first
 travelling exhibition
 Fremantle Print Award Fremantle Art Centre
 Prints from the APW Collection Survey show of recent works from the APW
 archive/
 Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne
- 1994** Ngajakura Ngurrara Minyarti: Festival of Perth Exhibition / Artplace Gallery,
 This is my country Perth
- 1993** Images of Power National Gallery of Victoria

Publications

- 2003** Martuwarra and Jila, Jumu, Jiwari and Wirrkuja, Exhibition Catalogue Cullity Gallery UWA
 Perth / Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency
 Australian Art Collector. Review / Maurice O'Riordan
 The Painted Desert The Fate of an Aboriginal Masterpiece , New Yorker Magazine July
 28, 2003
- 2002** Native Title Business Contemporary Indigenous Art. Joan Winter. Gurang Land Council.
 Regional Galleries Assn Qld
 Kurtal; Snake Spirit. Video Documentary / ABC Television.
- 2000** Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art, Oxford University Press & ANU
 Karrayili The history of Karrayili Adult Education Centre , IATSIS Canberra
- 2001** Painting Up Big, The Ngurrara Canvas , Kaltja Now National Aboriginal Cultural Institute -
 Tandanya
 18th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. Museum and Art Gallery of
 the Northern Territory
 People in a Landscape. Contemporary Australian Prints. Exhibition Catalogue. University
 of Melbourne
 Australia. 16th Asian International Art Exhibition. Exhibition Catalogue. Australian Print
 Workshop Inc.
- 1998** Jila Painted Waters of the Great Sandy Desert, Video Documentary / SBS Television
- 1994** Ngajakura Ngurrara Minyarti, This Is My Country, Exhibition Catalogue

Collections

National Gallery of Victoria
 Curtin University Collection, Perth
 Queensland State Gallery
 Berndt Museum of Anthropology
 Australian Print Workshop
 Flinders Art Museum, Flinders University
 Carleton College Art Collection, Northfield Minnesota
 Kennesaw State University Georgia

