Peter Skipper  c.1929 - 2007

Language    Walmajarri / Juwaliny  
Skin        Jangkarti
Country     Japingka

Peter Skipper is a Juwaliny / Walmajarri man who was born 1929 in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia at a place called Japingka. Peter, a bushman, had his first contact with kartiya (whitemen) when he was a young man. Peter travelled with his young wife Jukuna and other relations who drifted away from their countries to cattle stations in the Southern Kimberley in the early 1950s.

Peter, like many others who drifted away from their country worked on a cattle station. He worked as stockman for 20 years before moving his family to Fitzroy Crossing in the 1960s. They lived in the Old Mission area in Fitzroy Crossing. Other relations moved into the Old Mission so their children could attend the Mission School. Peter said, “I did my schooling out in the bush when I was a young man my father taught me”. Peter a strong man about his culture learnt how to drive a car and was taught how to read and write Walmajarri (Language). In 1986 Peter wrote two books in language which tell about his early life in the Great Sandy Desert.

Peter is a leader of the Walmajarri people and a respected Aboriginal law man who still has a clear mind about names of his country. Peter started painting because he worries a lot about his country Japingka a jila (living waterhole). Japingka is a spiritual place, owners of the jila (living waterhole) would sing to make the rain come. People travelled long distances to practice their culture there. It was like a big festival, it was our way of doing things.

It’s been a long time for the Walmajarri people to go back and visit their mothers and fathers country. Peter and many other relations are now going back to their country to claim what they left behind. Peter and relations visit birth places, sacred sites, to sing traditional songs, paint their part of country and to clean the waterholes. Many of these haven’t been lost. We are still strong with our culture and the desert is still our home land.

Exhibition History

Solo Exhibitions
2007    Mana-warnti (All the Trees) Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne
2003    'Jilji & Partiri (Sandhill and Flower)’ with Mona Chuguna, Artplace, Perth
2000    ‘Ngajukura Ngurrara (My Country)’ Artplace
1998    ‘Wangarr and Mangki Shadow and Spirit’, with Mona Chuguna, Artplace
1993    ‘Parntapi Bilnga’ with Butcher Cherel Janangoo, Artplace
1989    ‘Explorations, Patterns, Dreamings’, Craft Centre Gallery, Sydney

Group Exhibitions
2004    “This is still my country... 10 years on...” Perth International Arts Festival- Artplace, Perth
“Ngurra Canvas”, Perth International Arts Festival, Perth Concert Hall
“Peter Sipper & Mona Chuguna”, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
2003    Artplace Group Show 2003, Artplace, Perth
‘Martuwarra & Jila, Jumu, Jiwari & Wirruja’, Cullity Gallery, UWA
2002    Artplace Group Show 2002, Artplace, Perth
Melbourne Art Fair 2002, Melbourne
Group Show, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
2001    Ngurrara Canvas National Gallery of Australia
2001    with Jimmy Nerrimah, Jimmy Pike & Huey Bent, Framed Gallery, Darwin
2001  ‘Mangkaja Arts Ten Years On’, Mangkaja’s 10 year Anniversary Show, Tandanya, Adelaide

2000  Art of Place Heritage Commission Art Award, Old Parliament House, Canberra

1999  Story Boards Ceramic tiles from the Kimberley, Fremantle Art Centre
      Spirit Country: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Gantner Myer Collection. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco / California Palace of the Legion of Honour
      Peter Skipper and Jimmy Nerrimah, Cooee Gallery Sydney

1996  MangkajaAPW, Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide
      National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin

1995  National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin, Selected to tour nationally with the first NATSIAA travelling exhibition
      Mangkaja: Old Mangkaja New Prints, Exhibition of the first prints produced at Mangkaja, Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne

1994  Jarinyanu David Downs, Peter Skipper & Maryanne Purlta, Adelaide Fringe Festival, Tuldar Gallery, Adelaide
      Ngajakura Ngurrara Minyarti, this is my country, Festival of Perth Exhibition, Artplace

1993  Tarinoita: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art, Keravan Taidemuseo, Helsinki, Finland
      Contemporary Aboriginal Art from the Robert Holmes a Court Collections, Moree Plains Gallery, Moree
      Victoria
      Jarinyanu David Downs - Metaphysician Peter Skipper & Maryanne Purlta, Emerald Hill Gallery, Melbourne
      New Tracks Old Land: An Exhibition of Contemporary Prints from Aboriginal Australia, Massachusetts College of Art Boston, USA

1992  Jarinyanu David Downs and Peter Skipper, The Hogarth Galleries, Sydney
      Contemporary Aboriginal Art from the Robert Holmes a Court Collections, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth

1991  Aboriginal Art and Spirituality, The High Court of Australia, Parliament House- Canberra,
      The Waverley Centre- Victoria, Ballarat Fine Art Gallery- Ballarat

1990  Jarinyanu David Downs and Peter Skipper, The Chesser Gallery, Adelaide
      Jarinyanu David Downs, Peter Skipper & Maryanne Purlta: Paintings and Prints, The Chesser Gallery, Adelaide
      Ngarrangkarni: Jarinyanu David Downs, Peter Skipper & Maryanne Purlta, Roar 2 Studios, Melbourne
      South to North: Tandanya Contemporary Art, Gallerie La Belle Angele, Edinburgh
      Balanca 1990: Views, Vision, Influences, Queensland Art Gallery, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from the Robert Holmes a Court Collections, Carpenter Centre for the Visual Arts, Harvard University USA, James Ford Bell Museum- University of Minnesota USA, Lakewood Centre of the Arts-Lake Oswego USA, The Forum- St Louis, Missouri USA
      Abstraction, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

1988  Tagari Lia; My Family - Contemporary Aboriginal Art 1990: From Australia
      The Third Eye Centre, Glasgow- Scotland, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery & Museum, Swansea- UK, Cornerhouse, Manchester- UK
      Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia, Asia Society, New York
Publications

2004  Ian McLean, "This is still my country... 10 years on..." Reviews-WA, Art Collector, Issue27, pg209-210


Out of the Desert  Stories from the Walmajarri Exodus ed. Eirlys Richards, Joyce Hudson, & Pat Lowe Magabala Books

Geraldine Brooks, The Painted Desert The Fate of an Aboriginal Masterpiece New Yorker Magazine,July 28th

Martuwarra & Jila, Jumu, Jiwari & Wirrkuja  Cullity Gallery, UWA

2001  Australian Painting 1788 - 2000 Oxford University Press & ANU; p585

Painting Up Big, The Ngurrara Canvas  Kaltja Now National Aboriginal Cultural Institute- Tandanya


Karrayili  The history of Karrayili Adult Education Centre  AIATSIS, Canberra

Kaltja Now, Indigenous Arts Australia, Wakefield Press & Tandanya

Aboriginal Cultural Institute


1998  Jila Painted Waters of the Great Sandy Desert Video Documentary / SBS


1995  Mangkaja : Old Mangkaja New Prints, Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne

Jila Painted Waters of the Great Sandy Desert, Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency and Kimberley Land Council, Video Documentary / SBS

1994  Ngarrayi Muay Ngindaji, Ngajukura Ngurrara Minyarti, Ngindaji Ngarrayi Riwi, Ngayukunu Ngarra Ngaa: this is my country, Artplace & Mangkaja Arts


1991  Images of power: Aboriginal Art from the Kimberley: Exhibition catalogue Mangkaja Women’s Exhibition catalogue, Fremantle Art Centre, WA


1989  Pat Lowe & Jimmy Pike, Jilji (Life in the Great Sandy Desert), Magabala Books

1989  Caruana, W., Aboriginal Art, World of Art Series, Thames and Hudson, London.


Collections

National Gallery of Victoria, Australian Print Workshop- Melbourne, Art Gallery of Western Australia, National Gallery of Australia, Museum and Galleries of Northern Territory, Art Gallery of South Australia, University of South Australia Art Museum-Adelaide, Per Grieg Collection- Norway, The Holmes `a Court Collection- Perth