

**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.

Its 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 Cheral 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 & Wirrkuja', 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
- 1996 *Peter Skipper and Jimmy Nerrimah*, Coeee Gallery Sydney  
*MangkajAPW*, 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
- Jarinyanu David Downs, Peter Skipper & Maryanne Purlta*, Adelaide Fringe  
Festival, Tuldar Gallery, Adelaide
- 1994 *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  
*Crossroads - Towards a New Reality: Aboriginal Art from Australian*, The  
National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto  
*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  
*Tagari Lia; My Family - Contemporary Aboriginal Art 1990: From Australia*  
The Third Eye Centre, Glasgow- Scotland, Glynn Vivian Art  
Museum, Swansea- UK, Cornerhouse, Manchester- UK  
Gallery &  
1988 *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
- 2003 Ron Banks, "Desert partners in life & art", Today section, *The West Australian*, 8 Sept.  
*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 & Wirrkujja* 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
- 2000 Kleinert, S. & Neale, M., *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art & Culture*, Oxford University Press  
*Karrayili The history of Karrayili Adult Education Centre* AIATSIS, Canberra  
*Kaltja Now, Indigenous Arts Australia*, Wakefield Press & Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute
- 1999 Isaacs, J., *Spirit Country: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art*. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco Hardie Grant Books ed.
- 1998 *Jila Painted Waters of the Great Sandy Desert* Video Documentary / SBS
- 1998 Sutton, P., (ed.). et al *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia, exhibition catalogue*, Viking, New York.
- 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 *Ngarragi Muay Ngindaji, Ngajukura Ngurrara Minyarti, Ngindaji Ngarragi Riwi, Ngayukunu Ngurra Ngaa: this is my country*, Artplace & Mangkaja Arts
- 1993 Luthi, B., (ed.). et al *Dreamings: The Art of the First Australians, exhibition catalogue*, Dumont Buchverlag, Cologne, Germany
- Images of power: Aboriginal Art from the Kimberley: Exhibition catalogue  
Mangkaja Women's Exhibition catalogue, Fremantle Art Centre, WA
- 1991 Hodge, B., & Mishara, V., *Dark side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Post- modern Mind*, Allen & Unwin.
- 1990 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.
- 1984,  
1976, 1978 Hudson, J., *The Walmajarri*, Summer Institute of Linguistics, Australian Aborigines Branch, Darwin.

## 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