Regina Pilawuk Wilson

Biography

REGINA PILAWUK WILSON

Born 1948 in the Daly River region, Northern Territory, Australia.

Lives and works in Peppimenarti, Northern Territory, Australia.

Regina Pilawuk Wilson is a Ngan’gikurrungurr woman. Her work is exhibited widely, and is housed in public and private collections both in Australia and internationally. She is regarded as one of Australia’s leading Indigenous artists, and is the founder of the Peppimenarti community - the permanent settlement for the Ngan’gikurrungurr people in the Daly River Region since 1973.

The location of Peppimenarti is an important dreaming site for the Ngangikurrungurr language group and informs Regina’s art and weaving practices - skills she inherited from her grandmother and mother. After attending the Contemporary Art Biennale (Pacific Arts Festival) in 2000, Regina decided to add acrylic painting to her repertoire. Regina experimented with various painting techniques and designs during workshops held by the Darwin gallerist Karen Brown. During this time, she started to transfer her weaving designs and patterns into canvas, including syaw (fish-net), wupun (basket), string bags, wall mats and sun mats.

Regina won the General Painting category of the Telstra National Indigenous and Torres-Strait Islander Award in 2003 for a golden syaw (fish-net) painting. The cultural significance of ‘message sticks’ are also celebrated in her paintings– a traditional form of communication between communities. This is her story of the message stick (with assistance by Peppimenarti elder Captain Wodij):

When we were young we used to live at Daly River and his mob used to live at Uban, near Timber Creek.

There was no road, no anything.

They used to carry message sticks

They used to come to Daly River from Uban.

For weeks they used to travel.

They carried message sticks to remember how many days they travel to that certain place.

It was like first Aboriginal education... just to remember how many days to travel from a certain place to Daly.

They used to travel from here to Beswick too.

Even in flood waters.

They used to swim creeks and rivers to get to a place for ceremony.

This was before WWII.

They were really young men. I remember they used to come.

When the war started they moved back to Uban.

They used to walk long way, no motor car.
They used to join up at Moyle River to fight different clans.

They used to swim in the sea, no boat and less crocodiles.

Also by bringing the message stick they would bring people back with them... they would all walk together, sometimes for one year. Sometimes stay in one place for camp: big mob food, turtle, yam, fish.

They would walk slowly, those old people. And children too, and babies. They'd have the babies half way. We used to have bush nurses who would cut the cord with a mussel shell.

They used to take message stick to boss man of a language group. If Boss says yes, they'd all move.

If a mob went to another country for burning grass, the leader would get angry and a message stick would follow. Then there would be war.

If a man went off with message stick and didn't return, they think big trouble. A different clan would go and steal another man's wife.

Message stick is for war and ceremony and things like that.

That message stick means a lot.

The subject of durrmu (body painting dot) has more recently been explored by Regina. Regina has produced silkscreen prints (2001, 2007,2010) and etchings (2007, 2009) with Red Hand and Basil Hall Editions.

Examples of Regina’s work are held in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, The National Gallery of Victoria, The Gallery of Modern Art (Queensland Art Gallery), The British Museum and numerous private and corporate collections in Australia and overseas.

Her paintings have been included in many group exhibitions at public and private art institutions including the 3rd Moscow Biennale of Art, the Wynne Prize (2008 and 2009), AGNSW, and Dreaming Their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters at the National Museum of the Arts, Washington.

Regina is a Cultural Support Officer with Durrmu Arts, and has been instrumental in the art centre’s establishment and continued strength and success. She is also a judge for the Telstra NATSIAA awards, and sits on the board of the Indigenous Art Code.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 The Women’s Show, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

2019 WOVEN - WINTER 2019, Harvey Art Projects, Idaho

2018 The Women’s Show, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

2018 Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia, The Phillips Collection, Washington DC

2018 Ngerringkretj - We Hold Strong, Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Cultural Centre, Katherine

2017 The Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

2017 Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia, Nevada Museum of Art, Miami

2013 String Theory, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
2013 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, MAGNT, Darwin
2013 TOGART Art Award, Darwin
2013 ReGeneration – McCulloch & McCulloch, Melbourne
2013 TIME – Poimena Gallery, Launceston Tasmania
2012 ANKAAA – Big Family II, The Cross Arts Projects, Sydney
2012 Le Point de Papunya – Beyond the Papunya dot, IDAIA, Musée Du Montparnasse, Paris
2012 Weaving Designs by Durrmu Arts, Nomad Art, Darwin
2012 Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan-Levi Collection, Seattle Art Museum, Washington
2012 Murr-ma: Uncovering Aboriginal & Australian Contemporary Art, Michael Reid, Berlin
2012 Redlands Westpac Art Award, National Art School, Sydney
2011 The Women’s Show, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne
2011 Out of Australia: Prints and Drawings from Sidney Nolan to Rover Thomas, British Museum, London
2010 Shalom Gamarada, Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Sydney
2010 Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin
2010 Important Aboriginal Art, Caruana & Reid Fine Art, Sydney
2010 Prints and Pandanus, Nomad Art, Darwin
2009 3rd Moscow Biennale of Art, Moscow, Russia
2009 Floating Life: Contemporary Aboriginal Fibre Art, Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland
2009 Yewirr, Raft Artspace, Darwin
2009 Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin
2009 Country Culture Community, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2009 The Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2009 Southern Exchange, Hong Kong
2009 Shalom Gamarada, Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Sydney
2008 Telstra National Indigenous and Torres-Strait Islander Award, MAGNT, Darwin
2008 Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Darwin
2008 Shalom Gamarada, Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Sydney
2008 Important Aboriginal Art, Caruana Reid, Sydney
2008 The Sum of Us, Michael Reid, Sydney
2008 The Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2008 Ancient Culture, Modern Art, Club 21 Gallery, Four Seasons Hotel, Singapore
2007 Peppimenarti, Chalk Horse Gallery, Sydney
2006 Western Desert and Beyond, Central Tafe Art Gallery, Perth
2006 Deadly: Campbelltown Art Centre’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Collection, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, New South Wales
2006 My Country, Indigenous Art Fest, Noosa Blue Resort, Noosa
2006 Dreaming their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC
2005 Shalom Gamarada Art Exhibition, Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Sydney
2005 North by North-West: Contemporary Indigenous Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
2005 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award: Celebrating 20 Years, MAGNT, Darwin
2004 Peppimenarti, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
2003 Peppimenarti, Karen Brown Gallery, Darwin
2003 Colour Country, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland
2000 Contemporary Art Biennale in Noumea, staged as part of the Pacific Arts Festival, Noumea

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018 NGERRINGKRRETY: ONE VOICE, MANY STORIES, Second Street Gallery Charlottesville, Virginia
2011 Collection: New Works, Caruana Reid Fine Art at Michael Reid, Sydney
2008 New Works, Caruana Reid Fine Art at Michael Reid, Sydney
2008 New Works, Santa Monica Art Studios, LA
2006 New Works, Agathon Gallery, Melbourne
2005 New Works, Agathon Gallery, Sydney
2004 New Works, Karen Brown Gallery, Darwin

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Dennis Scholl Collection, USA
Levi-Kaplan Collection, USA
The British Museum, UK
Art Gallery of New South Wales, AUS
Queensland Art Gallery, AUS
National Gallery of Victoria, AUS
Campbelltown Arts Centre, AUS
Parliament House Collection, AUS
Colin and Elizabeth Laverty Collection, AUS
Grant Samuel Collection, AUS
Fife Capital Collection, AUS
Barrie & Jude Lepley Collection, AUS
KUNSTWERK, Alison and Peter W. Klein Collection, Eberdingen Nussdorf, Germany

AWARDS

2013 Finalist, Kate Challis RAKA Award, Ian Potter Museum of Art
2013 Finalist, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Darwin
2013 Finalist, Togart Arts Awards, Northern Territory
2009 Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
2008 Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales
2008 Finalist, Telstra National Indigenous and Torres-Strait Islander Award
2003 General Painting, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS / MEDIA

Henry Skerritt ‘Marking the Infinite’ The Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection USA, 2017
Daena Murray, hot springs The Northern Territory & Contemporary Australian Artists, 2013
McKlusky, Pam, Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Kaplan-Levi Collection, Seattle Art Museum, 2012
Inside Out Magazine, February 2012
Gordon, Alexandra, ‘Homespun’, Vogue Living, Jan-Feb 2012
Coppel, Stephen, Out of Australia: Prints and Drawings from Sidney Nolan to Rover Thomas catalogue, British Museum, 2011
Fesq, Harriet, catalogue entry, 3rd Moscow Biennale of Art, 2009

McCulloch, Susan, ‘Profile: Durrmu Arts’, *Australian Aboriginal Art Magazine*, Issue 1, 2009


Laverty, Colin and Elizabeth (eds), *Beyond Sacred: Recent Paintings from Australia’s Remote Aboriginal Communities*, Hardie Grant, Melbourne, 2008


Konau, Britta, *Dreaming their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters*, 2006


McDonald, John, ‘Living canvases blossom abroad’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, July 8th, 2006

McDonald, John, ‘Guiding Light: The year in visual arts’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec 23rd, 2005

McLaughlin, Murray, ‘Aboriginal art bringing money to NT’, 7.30 Report, ABC TV, 2nd June, 2003