

PENRITH
REGIONAL GALLERY
& THE
LEWERS BEQUEST

AUTUMN SUITE

A celebration
of Aboriginal culture
and philanthropy

27 February – 22 May 2016

AUTUMN SUITE

Introduction

Palya!*


Welcome to Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest Autumn Suite for 2016. This suite of exhibitions is a celebration of Aboriginal art and culture, and, of philanthropy. They include *Punuku Tjukurpa*, an exhibition of wooden carvings by Indigenous artists from central Australia (Main Gallery); *The Red House*, a series of paintings about land and cross-cultural perception, by Sydney artist Hayley Megan French (Lewers House); and *Celebrating Philanthropy*, art works gifted to the Gallery by Robin Gurr (Lounge Room Gallery).

Punuku Tjukurpa is an exhibition developed by Artback NT in association with Maruku Arts. It showcases a rich history, both secular and sacred, through examples of *punu* and *walka* boards curated from the archive of Maruku Arts based at Mutitjulu, near Uluru in the Northern Territory.

Punuku Tjukurpa includes works made by three generations of Anangu (central and western desert people) artists for whom the tradition of wood carving and painting has been passed down. Integral to the imparting of these physical skills to the next generation is the teaching of the stories which form the basis for the intricate designs and markings. Works include *piti* (wooden bowls), *miru* (spear throwers), *tjara* (shields), *kulaṭa* (spears) and beautiful carvings of desert birds and animals. The title of the exhibition, *Punuku Tjukurpa*, describes the story and the law behind these works.

As explained by Louise Partos, Executive Officer of Artback NT, "*Punuku Tjukurpa* offers a privileged insight into one of Australia's finest art movements and is an exhibition of national significance. *Punu* (carved objects made of wood) is a significant and prolific art form in Central Australia and its production and display are integral to the maintenance of culture and to the sharing of knowledge".

*Palya (Pitjantjatjara for hello)



Artist
Unknown
Tjara
year unknown
Wanari
(Mulga wood),
935x55x105mm

AUTUMN SUITE

Penrith Regional Gallery is privileged to receive and exhibit these artworks and their associated stories and we look forward to introducing Sydney audiences to the work of Maruku artists.

Artist Hayley Megan French's landscape suite, *The Red House* was produced following her recent residencies at Penrith Regional Gallery and also Parramatta Artists Studio. Although freshly minted, these works have a much longer genesis, based upon time spent in Warmun Aboriginal community and research undertaken for her PhD in consideration of the influence of Aboriginal art upon the work of contemporary Australian artists. *The Red House* is thus both homage to Aboriginal art and an attempt to be in conversation with it.

In *Celebrating Philanthropy* we acknowledge Robin Gurr, lawyer, arts patron and philanthropist. Since 2010 Robin Gurr has gifted 58 artworks to Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest. Many of these works are Aboriginal artworks collected from remote and regional communities and art centres. Although we continue to enjoy the support of Government including Penrith City Council and Arts NSW, philanthropic gestures such as that made by Robin Gurr are vital to the health and wellbeing of the regional gallery sector.

Robin Gurr's gift is both a generous and significant gesture as it allows the Gallery to build and enhance our collection of Aboriginal and contemporary art. In turn this increases local community access to contemporary art which would otherwise be locked up in private collections.

In recognition of Robin Gurr's ongoing generosity, the Board of Penrith Performing & Visual Arts wishes to show its appreciation and thanks in the launch of 'the Gurr Collection' as a collecting stream within the Gallery's own collection. Pieces from the collection will be exhibited across the year, will be available for loan to other collecting institutions and will also form an important part of our education program.

Please enjoy.

Dr Lee-Anne Hall

Director, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest
March 2016

Hayley Megan French

This or that (2 of 5)

2016

acrylic on canvas

120 x 120 (x3)



Artback NT presents
PUNUKU TJUKURPA

Punuku Tjukurpa is an exhibition of works from the Maruku Arts archive at Mutitjulu near Uluru in the Northern Territory. It features punu and walka boards created by three generations of Anangu (central and western desert people) from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, Ngaatjatjarra Lands and Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

Punuku Tjukurpa includes eighty-eight punu works featuring burnt designs on carved wooden forms. Works presented range from pitji (wooden bowls), miru (spear throwers), tjara (shields), kulata (spears) to beautiful carvings of desert birds and animals. The exhibition also features photographs, audio and film.

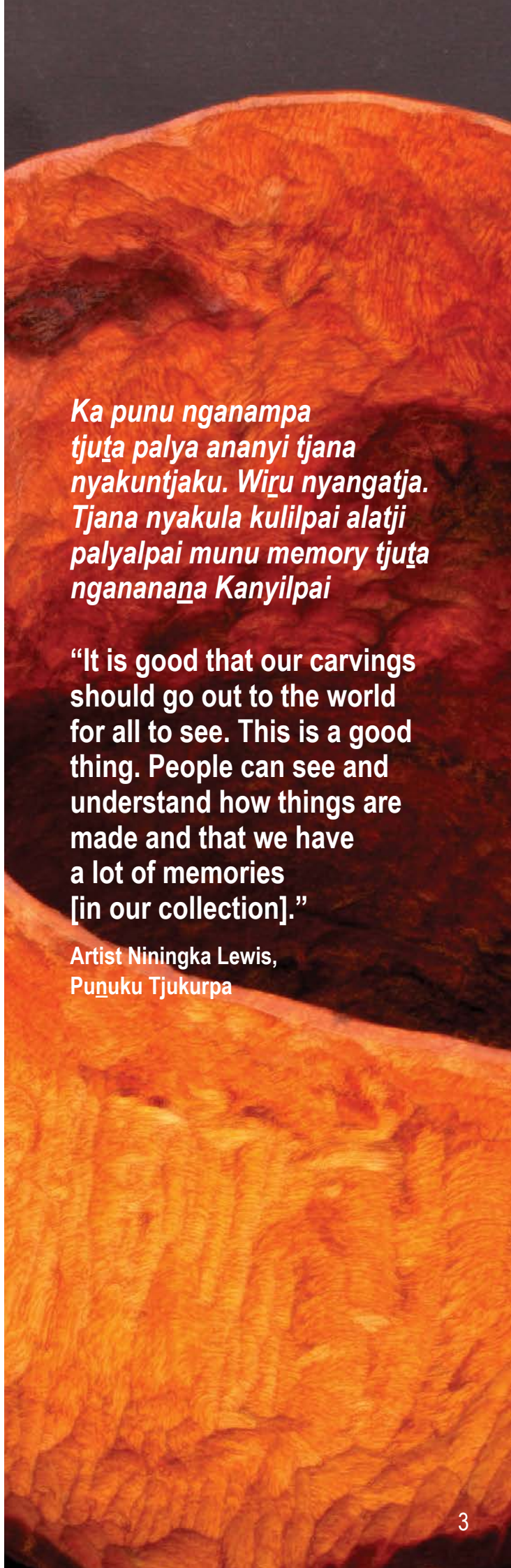
In Punuku Tjukurpa, Anangu share their culture, knowledge and the Law that forms the basis for the intricate designs and markings and the stories that accompany them.

punu: Anything made of wood, especially artefacts and implements. Living, growing tree or bush or a piece of wood, stick, cut-off branches.

-ku: Case ending, a word ending that indicates the owner or rightful user of something, the custodian or caretaker.

Tjukurpa: Story. Dreaming. Law.

walka: A mark or pattern using hot wire technique that has cultural and ritual significance.



*Ka punu nganampa
tjuta palya ananyi tjana
nyakuntjaku. Wiru nyangatja.
Tjana nyakula kulilpai alatji
palyalpai munu memory tjuta
ngananana Kanyilpai*

**“It is good that our carvings
should go out to the world
for all to see. This is a good
thing. People can see and
understand how things are
made and that we have
a lot of memories
[in our collection].”**

**Artist Niningka Lewis,
Punuku Tjukurpa**

Artback NT presents
PUNUKU TJUKURPA

AUTHORISATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WARNING: Indigenous people are respectfully advised that names and images of deceased people may appear in the Punuku Tjukurpa Exhibition.

The artists in Punuku Tjukurpa are from various Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaatjatjarra language groups.

Curator: Stephen Fox

Cultural Advisors: Billy Cooley, Rene Kulitja, Janet Inyika, Judy Trigger, Lydia Angus, Niningka Lewis, Kathy Tozer and Clive Scollay

Interpreter: Kathy Tozer

Photographer: Shane Mulcahy

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Niningka Lewis

Teapot

2013

Itara (river red gum) and acrylic paint
270x120x90mm



Jorna Newberry

Mimpu

c.2000

Muur-muurpa

310x300x340mm

Artback NT presents Punuku Tjukurpa.

Touring exhibition from Artback NT: Arts Development and Touring in conjunction with the Australia Council for the Arts and Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums.



Artback NT presents
PUNUKU TJUKURPA

List of Works

Topsy Tjulyata, Pulya Taylor

Kuniya Ngamputjara

c. 1994

Itara (river red gum)

Billy Cooley

Liru (snake)

1999

Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Ngintaka

c. 1993

Itara (river red gum), *kiti*
 (spinfex/mulga resin)

Pulya Taylor

Tjulpu

c. 2000

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Tjulpu

c. 2000

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Tjulpu

c. 2000

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Kipara

c. 1996

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Pinytjantjara

c. 1996

Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Tjulpu Kutjara

c. 1993

Itara (river red gum)

George Okai

Kamula Mankurpa

c. 1995

Itara (river red gum)

Ivy Inkatji

Tingkanku Ngalkuni

c. 1998

Itara (river red gum)

Niningka Lewis

Tingkanku Ngalkuni

c. 1998

Itara (river red gum)

Ivy Inkatji

Tingkanku Ngalkuni

1999

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Wampata

c. 1995

Itara (river red gum)

Rolley Mintuma

Ngintaka

2011

Muur-muurpa (desert
 bloodwood)

Artist Unknown

Ngintaka

c. 1994

Itara (river red gum)

Ivy Inkatji

Ngintaka (perentie)

c. 1999

Itara (river red gum)

Topsy Tjulyata

Ngintaka (perentie)

c. 1998

Itara (river red gum)



Ivy Inkatji

Piti

c. 1995

Itara (river red gum)

710x195x290mm

Topsy Tjulyata

Ngintaka Wanganata

c. 1998

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Ngintaka

1987

Itara (river red gum)

Billy Cooley

Liru

2012

Itara (river red gum)

Rolley Mintuma

Kuniya (python)

c. 1998

Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Walputi

c. 2000

Itara (river red gum)

Artback NT presents

PUNUKU TJUKURPA

List of Works

Artist Unknown

Ngaya
c.1994
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Ngaya
c.1994
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Walputi
c.1998
Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Puntaru
c.2000
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Tjilkamaŋa
c.1992
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Rapita
c.1995
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Kuniya
c.1992
Itara (river red gum)

Pulya Taylor

Ngintaka
c.1999
Itara (river red gum)

Niningka Lewis

Tjulpu Tjuŋa
c.1999
Itara (river red gum)

Niningka Lewis

Teapot
2013
Itara (river red gum),
acrylic paint

Niningka Lewis

Vase
2013
Itara (river red gum),
acrylic paint

Stanley Doolan

Tjulpu Tjuŋa Punungka
2005
Itara (river red gum),
acrylic paint

Mr Kenta

Wati (man)
c.1993
Ininti (batwing coral tree seed),
acrylic paint, wool

Mr Kenta

Wati (man)
c.1993
Itara (river red gum), acrylic
paint

Mr Kenta

Minyma (woman)
c.1993
Itara (river red gum), acrylic
paint

Artist Unknown

Mimpu
Unknown
Itara (river red gum)

Jorna Newberry

Mimpu
c.2000
Muur-muurpa (desert
bloodwood)

Artist Unknown

Wira
c.2000
Metal hub cap

Ivy Ingkatji

Piti
c.1995
Itara (river red gum)

Topsy Tjulyata

Piti
c.2000
Itara (river red gum), *kiti*
(spinifex/mulga resin)

Topsy Tjulyata

Piti
c.1997
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Piti
c.1992
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Kanilypa
c.1992
Itara (river red gum), *kiti*
(spinifex/mulga resin)

Artist Unknown

Wira
c.1992
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Wira
c.1992
Itara (river red gum)

Artist Unknown

Wira
c.1993
Muur-muurpa (desert
bloodwood)

Artback NT presents
PUNUKU TJUKURPA

List of Works

Artist Unknown

Wira
c.1993
Muur-muurpa (desert
bloodwood)

Lulu Cooley

Pitji
2012
Itara (river red gum)

Joanne S Cooley

Pitji
2013
Itara (river red gum)

Narelle Holland

Wana
2003
Wanari (mulga)

Artist Unknown

Kuturu
2014
Wanari (mulga)

Reggie Jackson

Tjara
c.1999
Wanari (mulga wood)

Reggie Jackson

Tjara
c.1998
Wanari (mulga), acrylic paint

Artist Unknown

Tjara
c.2000
Wanari (mulga)

Artist Unknown

Tjara
Wanari (Mulga wood), *kiti*
(spinifex/mulga resin), ochre

Artist Unknown

Tjara
Wanari (Mulga wood), ochre

Mr J Giles

Tjara
Wanari (Mulga wood), ochre

Gregory Fox

Tjara
Wanari (Mulga wood)

Artist Unknown

Tjara
Unknown
Wanari (Mulga wood), ochre,
acrylic paint

Artist Unknown

Tjara
Unknown
Wanari (mulga), ochre

Walter Pukutiwara

Miru
Unknown
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *kanti* (quartz flake),
pulyku (sinew), ochre

Artist Unknown

Miru
Unknown
Wanari (mulga), *kanti* (quartz
flake), ochre

Jim Nyukuti

Miru
2004
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew),
acrylic paint

Artist Unknown

Miru
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew)

Artist Unknown

Miru
Wanari (mulga),
kiti (spinifex/ mulga resin),
pulyku (sinew), ochre

Artist Unknown

Miru
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew)

Frank Young

Kulata
2012
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew)

Frank Young

Kulata
2012
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew)

Robert Woods

Kulata
2002
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
mulga resin), *pulyku* (sinew)

Rolley Mintuma

Kali
c.1998
Ngalta (desert kurrajong),
acrylic paint

Artist Unknown

Kali
Unknown
Wanari (mulga), ochre

Artist Unknown

Kali
Unknown
Wanari (mulga), ochre, oil

Artback NT presents
PUNUKU TJUKURPA

List of Works

Artist Unknown

Kali
 c.1992
Wanari (mulga wood)

Artist Unknown

Kali
Wanari (mulga), acrylic paint

Artist Unknown

Kali
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga wood)

Artist Unknown

Kali
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga wood)

Artist Unknown

Kali
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga), ochre

Artist Unknown

Tjuṯinypa
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga)

Artist Unknown

Tjuṯinypa
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
 mulga resin), *kanti* (quartz flake)

Artist Unknown

Tjuṯinypa
 Unknown
Itara (river red gum), *kiti*
 (spinifex/mulga resin), quartzite

Ushma Scales

Tjuṯinypa
 c.2002
Wanari (mulga)

Artist Unknown

Waliyiti
Wanari (mulga), *kiti* (spinifex/
 mulga resin), *kanti* (quartz
 flake), ochre

Artist Unknown

Tjuṯinypa
 Unknown
Wanari (mulga)

Kaiu Kaiu

Walka Board
 c.1995
 Plywood

Joanne Cooley

Walka Board
 2012
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Sadie Singer

Walka Board
 2008
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Niningka Lewis

*Early Days: tourists stop at
 Mulga Park, Anangu sitting with
 the punu*
Walka Board
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Rene Kulitja

Walka Board
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Billy and Lulu Cooley

Walka Board Puzzle
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Interpretative Sign

c.1990
 Metal with paint

Interpretative Sign

c.1990
 Metal with paint

Interpretative Sign

c.1990
 Metal with paint

Interpretative Sign

c.1990
 Metal with paint

Pulya Taylor

Anangu Maruku Arts Centre
 and homelands and
 communities it services
 1988
 Plywood

Judy Trigger

Walka Board
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Judy Trigger

Walka Board
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

Judy Trigger

Walka Board
 2013
 Acrylic paint on plywood

HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

The Red House

Hayley Megan French is an artist of serious intent. To watch her in the studio is to see an artist thinking, waiting upon, and finally painting one big idea across multiple canvases. Her idea and project is to consider land or 'country' as it is painted, thought about and experienced. In doing so she examines the influence of an Aboriginal world view and aesthetic - art practices, symbols and iconography upon the art practice of non-Aboriginal artists. Perhaps not intentionally, but achieving it none-the-less, she has both borrowed and created a lexicon in paint with which to express place, and relationship to place.

The works in The Red House are ostensibly landscapes, meditations upon the earth and time spent in the east Kimberley community of Warmun. French sat down in the country of this continent's great artists: Rover Thomas, Mabel Juli, Freddy Timms, Queenie McKenzie and Paddy Bedford. And having sat down for a time, she began to paint her felt experience. The scale of these paintings speaks to the bigness of that experience. Large works stand in concert to each other as if one story, one never-ending story. They are both inchoate and articulate, and they seek a language that might be shared.

In each work the immense earth and sky is reduced to elemental forms, all carved with colour - black, white and orange. Paint is layered upon paint, paint upon canvas. Surfaces are scratched and scarred producing shadow, and a tracery of what lies beneath. Palette and method is both a distillation and explosion of experience. Is black the hallowed earth, the night or the colour of skin? Is it experience, depth, desolation or damage? Is white the blinding sun or the blinding skin? Is it the unseeable or the enlightened self? And is orange, just maybe, a disruptive happiness of artist finding country?

Dr Lee-Anne Hall

Director

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest

March 2016



HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

The Red House

ARTIST STATEMENT

The paintings in *The Red House* are imagined and constructed spaces that operate between moments, places, memories of time spent in Warmun in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia. The four rooms of Lewers House form a network of these spaces, created through one or a series of paintings. Each of these shapes, erasures, layers and repetitions are meaningful, but more in their evocation of a feeling or a place than in their direct relation to one.

Traveling to Warmun in 2012 had a transformative influence on my thinking, practice and research. With the support of the Marten Bequest Traveling Scholarship for Painting, I lived and worked within the Warmun artist community for 3 months in 2015 and will be returning this year to explore more of the East Kimberley region. This body of work has both emerged out of this experience, and forms a significant part of my research process.

The Red House forms part of a larger project: painting as a way of understanding the influence of Aboriginal art on my own practice, and more widely, on artists in Australia. Engaging with Warmun continues to open my mind to different understandings. Acknowledging these differences is an education imperative to being in this place. For me, art carries this transformative potential.

These works have been created with the support of the Marten Bequest Traveling Scholarship for Painting, Parramatta Artist Studios and the Penrith Regional Gallery Summer Studio Residency.

Hayley Megan French is represented by Galerie pompom, Sydney and James Makin Gallery, Melbourne.



The Red House



White Painting



This or that part 5

HAYLEY MEGAN FRENCH

The Red House

List of Works

**All works courtesy
of the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney**

Hayley Megan French
From Warmun to Kununurra
2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
And again
2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
The Red House
2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
The Red House II
2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
One of the reasons 2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
For Ivy
2016
acrylic on canvas
150 x 270

Hayley Megan French
October 2015 (1)
2015
acrylic on canvas
150 x 150

Hayley Megan French
October 2015 (2)
2015
acrylic on canvas
150 x 150

Hayley Megan French
October 2015 (3)
2015
acrylic on canvas
150 x 150

Hayley Megan French
White painting
2016
acrylic on canvas
100 x 100

Hayley Megan French
This or that (1 of 5)
2016
acrylic on canvas
120 x 120

Hayley Megan French
This or that (2-4 of 5)
2016
acrylic on canvas
120 x 120 (x3)

Hayley Megan French
This or that (5 of 5)
2016
acrylic on canvas
120 x 120



From Warmun to Kununurra



And again

ROBIN GURR

Celebrating Philanthropy

This exhibition celebrates the ongoing association between Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest and lawyer and art collector Ms Robin Gurr. The works on display have been selected from a total of 52 Aboriginal works donated to the Gallery by Robin Gurr under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. The importance of this relationship is recognised by the Gallery in the creation of a formal collection strand to be known as the Robin Gurr Collection.

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest is the outcome of a grand philanthropic gesture. It was the vision of modernist artist Margo Lewers that her former home and artwork collection be gifted to the people of Penrith in order to create a vibrant centre for art. This gift was formally received by Penrith City Council in 1980. In subsequent years both PCC and State Government supported a building works program resulting in the Main Gallery and development of administrative spaces, studios and collection area.

Importantly, the Gallery has focused on collection strands which include modernist art, contemporary art and Aboriginal artworks. A strong impetus for this direction has been the Gallery's role as custodians of two Aboriginal rock carvings located within the Gallery grounds at the front of Ancher House. These works were rescued from destruction by Gerald Lewers during the construction of the Warringah Expressway at Brookvale in 1961.

Since 2010 Robin Gurr has donated a range of paintings, sculptures and woven works, primarily gathered from Aboriginal communities in her travels throughout regional and remote Australia. Exhibited together, these artworks reveal a personal narrative journey into country, connecting creator and collector.

As such, the works from the Robin Gurr Collection can offer enriching exhibition and educative experiences and opportunities. These benefits were first showcased in



Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

Women's Dreaming Place

1997

acrylic on canvas

122x153

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Agency Ltd

the 2010 exhibition *Gathered Up: The Gurr Collection* in which a number of works on display were included in an exhibition catalogue and accompanied by an education booklet. Since that inaugural exhibition, the donated works have continued to feature in Collection exhibitions as well as educational programs for both local and international groups.

ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION

This exhibition showcases how artworks bear witness to Aboriginal law, lore and place relatedness. In this sense they are akin to Maps of the Aboriginal world and world view.

Aboriginal people have a strong spiritual connection to land. This connection is articulated through expressive forms of dance, song, and design – be it painted on the body, on the earth or on canvas.

Commonly, Aboriginal artworks depict more than the physical features of the land; they also include information about weather and seasonal changes, as well as recording information about animals, birds and fish that also share the land. Importantly these artworks are deeply concerned with ancestral figures, stories and movement across the land. Aboriginal mapping in this sense is about being in a harmonious relationship with the land.

Through art-making and the associated activities of storytelling and singing, Aboriginal artists bring to life the spirit of the land. With each iteration their relationship to country and its stories are honoured and passed down through the generations. Through these artworks you are invited to reflect upon your own connection to land.

The artworks shown here are an important part of the Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest Collection. Our thanks and appreciation go to Robin Gurr for the generous donation of artwork and for her ongoing support of Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest.

ROBIN GURR

Celebrating Philanthropy

SPEECH | WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

This Gallery is a very appropriate place for us to be thinking about art and philanthropy, since it had its genesis in the great and generous philanthropic gift by Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers, themselves both artists, of their parents' property and its contents here on the banks of the Nepean River, to the people of Penrith and to the Western Sydney Region. We have been reminded today that art in its broadest sense was part of this land long before the Lewers family inhabited it and turned it into a centre for Modernist artistic practice and thinking.

I am not an unreserved fan of Winston Churchill. However, I do enjoy telling one story about him, particularly when the world seems to be in a constant state of war and to my mind, a disproportionate amount of resources is allocated in that direction. During the Second world War when asked to cut the arts budget to more fully support the war effort, he is alleged to have refused and responded "What are fighting for then?" It is good to be reminded what we are fighting for and that art is at the centre of civil society. It is essential to our humanity. It is both a means of individual self expression and of binding us together and understanding who we are as a society. It assists us to communicate with each other across ages and generations (defeating even death it has been said) and within and across cultural groups - particularly important in a diverse community.

Art is powerful - that is well understood by those regimes who seek to destroy and control its products and use it to repress their people. That is why it is worth fighting for. It is these central beliefs which have been the basis for supporting the development the Gallery's collection, although as we can see here today the Gallery is way way more than a collection - that is merely a small part of what it seeks to do. It is, however, a privilege to be able to contribute to this aspect of its work.



Robin Gurr
Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers
Bequest
Autumn Suite Opening
12 March 2016

It has often been said, and I can vouch for the truth of the statement, that collecting art is an addiction - albeit a publicly sanctioned one. I think it is probably more fun than most addictions! When I started collecting art it was as a personal pleasure, which it still is - it is only in more recent years that I started to think whether it could and should migrate to the public sphere. I think of it as "sharing" something I have been privileged to have been the custodian of rather than "giving" as I do not believe individuals can "possess" art. When the Gallery mounted the "Gathered Up" exhibition I was forced to think about why I enjoyed and collected art. I concluded that art has always assisted me to "see" things of which I would not otherwise be aware, to create a more ordered and understandable personal world. In that sense it has been a necessity. In the statement contained in the catalogue accompanying that exhibition I talked more fully about why I collected art and Aboriginal art in particular and what it has meant to me. I do not want to reiterate that here, although it is still all true.

I am particularly pleased that the Gallery collection has a major focus on Aboriginal art, including in particular contemporary art. Not only has the Western Sydney Region a comparatively large Aboriginal population but as non-Aboriginal Australians we are all able to share and take pride in Aboriginal history, cultural identity and creativity. They are part of who we are as an Australian inhabiting this land. Non Aboriginal people have much to learn about belonging to place from Aboriginal people and their cultural creations, including all of the arts - visual, musical, plastic and performance.

Had there been this understanding from the beginning I like to think the history and the current situation in relation to Aboriginal people and to our environment would have been very different.

I enjoy beauty. The notion of beauty in art and what constitutes it is now of course a greatly contested one. The hugely successful contemporary artist Grayson Perry, however, whose retrospective show "My Pretty Little Art Career" is currently at the MCA in Sydney, in his entertaining and very popular 2013 Reith Lectures (they were the most popular lectures since the series began) has no difficulty in describing great art as "awesomely beautiful" and says he counts his blessings at being in a business where he is "duty bound to seek out and look for beauty." (Grayson Perry (2014) "Playing the Gallery" p.133 publication based on his 2013 Reith Lectures). He also records the fact that in this digital age "people are keener than ever to visit art galleries, to be in the presence of the actual unique object (and take a selfie in front of it to post on Twitter or whatever the latest platform is) and there are more artists, dealers, collectors and curators than ever." (p.134) So we can conclude that there is an increasing number of people who also enjoy the pleasure and stimulation offered by art, and can more easily do so by it being located close to where they live and in a place they feel is part of their everyday lives. Art is a physical activity and proximity to it in the physical sense nurtures a sense of connection to it.

"Art is where you are" - whether making it or enjoying it - or both - that is the message conveyed by regional galleries and the one I believe in and want to support, which is why I have made a considered decision to contribute to them rather than their somewhat better endowed counterparts in the centre of capital cities. Access to properly endowed cultural institutions is as much a matter of human rights and social justice as access to other public goods. I cannot imagine a world without art any more than a world without law.

Fortunately there is unlikely ever to be a world without art because, as has been demonstrated time and time again, people will do it, however difficult the circumstances. Regional galleries can provide a real focus for their communities and, as part of a network of cultural institutions, nurture the development of community and individual art practice of diverse kinds. They are an important part of growing what is sometimes termed "social capital."

The presence of such institutions in the region is central to the region's vision of itself and to the opportunities it offers to its people for a full participation in civil society. That is why I have found somewhat dispiriting, the recent public discussion about the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Western Sydney. Leaving aside the issue of what should happen to the valuable piece of land in Ultimo it currently occupies and whether it should remain in public ownership - which is really a separate issue - we have been subject to the same old arguments - essentially that no one would visit - it would be inaccessible to the people who mattered, whoever they are - but they do seem to include foreign tourists - and that sponsors would shun it. Some of the more bizarre and breathtaking claims, which are either disingenuous or based on a profound ignorance and misunderstanding of contemporary Western Sydney, have been that the Powerhouse's old planes, steam engines and automobiles are an ill fit for the young and culturally diverse population of Western Sydney and that its relocation (without consultation - which is probably true) would be taking away something from the people of the inner city which they want (a contention not supported I might add by documented falling visitor numbers and recent criticisms from designers and others) to give to Western Sydney something it never asked for! There clearly needs to be a lot more and louder asking!

There has been talk of a "second rate" institution as if its re location mysteriously has to affect its quality! If it is properly funded there is no reason why this should be the case - after all most of its collection resides most of the time in a warehouse in Castle Hill. Given the private investment and the development in this region I find it hard to believe that sponsors would be found wanting if a concerted effort were made to encourage cultural philanthropy by those who have made greater or lesser fortunes here and governments played their part in recognising and encouraging them.

There has been a huge flowering of cultural and artistic activity in Western Sydney over the last thirty five years and this needs to be recognised and properly supported by governments at all levels and by individuals in various ways. It is hard to believe that there are still those who think that the cultural centre of gravity is inner Sydney. That has not been the case for some considerable time. Strengthening and supporting our existing regional cultural institutions and encouraging private support of them can only assist the arguments for much greater cultural investment of all kinds in this region - investment commensurate with its vitality, growth and maturity.

ROBIN GURR

Celebrating Philanthropy

List of Works

Charlene Carrington*Bullock Hoof Rock*

2005

ochre pigments on plywood

Language: Gija

Community: Warmun

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Charlene Carrington***Texas Crossing*

2005

ochre pigments on plywood

Language: Gija

Community: Warmun

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Lorna Kantilla***untitled*

2008

ochre on canvas

Language: Tiwi

Community: Nguui, Bathurst
Island

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Lily Karadada***Wandjina*

2005

ochre on canvas

Language: Tjarintjin/Wunambal

Area: Kimberley

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery & The

Lewers Bequest Collection

Patricia Marrfurra*McTaggart AM**Crocodile Skin*

2008

acrylic on canvas

Language: Ngangiwumirri

Community: Daly River,

Northern Territory

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2015

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Inyuwa Nampitjinpa***Women's Dreaming Place*

1997

acrylic on canvas

Language: Pintupi

Community: Kintore

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Tjunkiya Napaltjarri***untitled*

2008

mixed media on canvas

Language: Pintupi

Community: Rapalangya (north
west of Kintore)

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2015

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Marika Patrick***Mangidilban*

2005

ochre pigment on canvas

Language: Gija

Community: Warmun

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest
Collection**Ashley Scobie***Mens Business*

2000

acrylic on canvas

Language: Pintupi

Community: Kintore

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2010

Penrith Regional Gallery & The

Lewers Bequest Collection

ROBIN GURR

Celebrating Philanthropy

List of Works

Bessie Nakamarra Sims

Mawurriji

2005

acrylic on canvas

Language: Walpiri

Community: Warlukurlangu

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2010

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest

Collection

Linus Warlapinni

Pumpuni Jilamara

2004

natural ochre on canvas

Language: Tiwi

Community: Melville Island

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2010

Penrith Regional Gallery & The

Lewers Bequest Collection

Conrad Tipungwuti

Pwoja Pukamani

(Body Paint Design)

2004

natural ochre on canvas

Language: Tiwi

Community: Melville Island

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2013

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest

Collection

Charlie Ward Tjakamarra

assisted by his wife

Yukultji Napangati

untitled

2000

acrylic on canvas

Language: Pintupi

Donated through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts

Program by Robin Gurr, 2015

Penrith Regional Gallery

& The Lewers Bequest

Collection

AUTUMN SUITE

Acknowledgements

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest
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Artback NT

Maruku Arts

Hayley Megan French

Robin Gurr

Exhibition opened by Robin Gurr

Our partners:

Muru Mittigar

Penrith Performing & Visual Arts:

Chairman: The Hon Peter Anderson AM

CEO: Hania Radvan

Summer Exhibition Suite Exhibition Team:

Director: Dr Lee-Anne Hall

Exhibition Manager: Marian Simpson

Collections Manager: Dr Shirley Daborn

Education Manager: Naomi McCarthy

Marketing Manager: Krissie Scudds

Media and Communications Manager: Dimity Mullane

Catalogue design: Rachel Anning

Installation Consultation: Vanessa Hutchins

Cover Image and right:

Ivy Inkatji

Piti (detail)

c. 1995

Itara: River Red Gum

710x195x290mm



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