

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

Story

Ngarralja is a Wangkajunga/Walmajarri man. He was born at Yarnkurnja, 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

2009 Luka (Mud) with wife Dorothy May Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne
2007 Jilji Jaa Marrtuwarra with wife Dorothy May Brigitte Braun Gallery, Melbourne

Group

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: Nurrara Canvas Artplace, Perth
 Perth Concert Hall, Perth International Arts Festival

2003 Jila, Jumu, Jiwari & Wirruja University of Western Australia
 Murrkunkura Ngarrangkarnijangka Raft Artspace Darwin
 Nurrara: 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 Nurrara 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 Coomalie Culture Centre / Batchelor NT
 Group Show Australian Print Workshop Gallery, Melbourne

2000 Fremantle Print Award Fremantle Art Centre
 People in a Landscape: Contemporary Australian Prints Cultural Centre of the Philippines, Manila

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

Publications

- 2003** Martuwarra and Jila, Jumu, Jiwari and Wirrukuja, 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
theNorthern 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