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HUGHIE BENT (1930-2006)

The Last Paintings

Brigitte Braun is proud to present this exhibition as a tribute to a great Walmajarri painter.

“Munangu (Hughie Bent) was born 1930 and grew up in the Great Sandy Desert in Walmajarri country. For most of the year his people were widely dispersed over the vast land in small groups, coming together in the late dry season in bigger groups at major permanent waterholes (jila) for the main ceremony time. In the 1950s, however, the Walmajarri diaspora out of the Great Sandy Desert began with many of the clans moving north to the station country in the Fitzroy Valley. Hughie’s clan moved to Cherrabun Station, when he was still a youth, and there he began his working life as a stockman.

He married Ngarta (Jinny Bent) at Cherrabun and they lived there for much of their adult life until the next great movement of Aboriginal people off the stations to the fringes of the towns in the 1970s – a direct result of the Equal Pay legislation of the 1960’s. Hughie and Jinny moved into Fitzroy Crossing, eventually settling at Bayulu Community on Gogo Station, a few kilometres out of town. Here they lived as displaced persons on other people’s land.

During the mid 1980s Walmajarri people started to go back to country in large numbers, setting up small encampments or outstations, which they visited when access was possible. In 1983, Hughie and Jinny, with their in-laws, Jukuna (Mona Chugana) and Pijaji (Peter Skipper), set up an outstation at Kurlku, on the edge of the desert. Although they didn’t live there permanently it gave them an opportunity to travel deeper into the desert, towards their childhood homelands.

Hughie started painting in 1991 and his first paintings were exhibited at a group exhibition in 1992. With his wife Ngarta (Jinny Bent) (1930-2002) he held three exhibitions at Artplace in Perth.

Hughie died in late 2006. He was a gentle man. Although buffeted by the times that he found himself in, he persisted in documenting his country using this new medium of painting that he had discovered. It gave him a means of connecting with his inner self. This last exhibition of his work stands as a testament to a gifted and talented man.” (Joel Smoker)

The exhibition runs from **12 March until 29 March 2008**. There will be **opening drinks** with the artist’s long time agent, Joel Smoker, on **Saturday 15 March from 3-5pm** at Brigitte Braun Gallery 4 White Street, Windsor 3181. Gallery hours during exhibitions are **Wed – Sat 1-4pm and by appointment**. For more information please call Brigitte Braun on **03 95212324**.

The exhibition can be seen on **www.artplace.com.au**