

Julie Dowling**1.1. Dispossession Series: Me, Myself, Julie no. 1, set of 5, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x100cm

\$

Text:

I have the right to practice my own land lore

Painting:

This is a self-portrait dealing with my own practice of enquiry into the notion of hybridity and fusion art. It is about questioning whether postcolonial and post-modern concepts can be at all unified. I say without the rights to my land and its lore, I will continue to be a spiritual fringe-dweller. What is stopping me is legislation and this work is an act against imperial enlightenment. It is part of a series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

Julie Dowling**1.2. Dispossession Series: My sista, Carol no. 2, set of 5, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x100cm

\$

Text:

Democracy means majority rule with minority rights.

Painting:

This painting is a portrait of my twin sister, Carol Dowling and shows her about to leave to deliver a lecture at Curtin University. Carol believes that democracy is under challenge in Australia because of the conditions and treatment received by her people in Australia today. The national government wants us to be a part of a liberal democracy rather than for us to be recognised as distinct nations who have never ceded sovereignty. It is part of a series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

Julie Dowling**1.3. Dispossession Series: My Mum, Ronnie no. 3, set of 5, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x100cm

\$

Text:

I have the right to practice my own land based faith, but not in this country.

Painting:

This painting is a portrait of my mother, Veronica Mary Dowling and the words she spoke in our kitchen. This painting talks about how my mother has felt hopeless about the boundaries that exist preventing her from continuing the knowledge she learnt from her grandmother in her own country. It is part of a series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

Julie Dowling**1.4. Dispossession Series: My Nana, Molly no. 4, set of 5, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x100cm

\$

Text:

I cannot pay for the land where my ancestors are buried.

Painting:

This painting is a portrait of my grandmother, Molly Dowling and describes the conversations I have had with her as an 85 year old. It is part of a series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

Julie Dowling**1.5. Dispossession Series: My Great Uncle George no. 5, set of 5, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x100cm

\$

Text:

Give me back my land

Painting:

This painting is a portrait of my Great Uncle, George Latham who is wearing his best town hat to a Native title meeting. At this meeting, this 89 year old man was told that we could only be classified as an 'interested party' in legal terms because his testimony disputed boundary claims between Noongar and Badimaya nations. He is crying here for his country. This work is part of a series making comment using individual portraits of family and friends directly asserting their views on dispossession from culture, country and lore.

Julie Dowling**2. Warridah Melburra Ngupi, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 150x120cm

\$25000

Translation for this painting's title is:

Warridah:

Wedge Tailed Eagle (a significant creation being for my family)

Melburra:

The Badimaya name for my great great-grandmother, Melbin

Ngupi:

The word for water

This painting shows my great great-grandmother, Melbin in a Kangaroo cloak (known as a Booka). She stands on a cold night navigating, by the stars to find water for her people. It is an imagined image of Melbin before white contact in a heroic gestural style of Velazquez, Ingres and Goya.

Julie Dowling**3. Didn't you know you were aboriginal?, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 120x150cm

\$25000

This picture shows a small family reunion at my grandmother's house when I was four years old. Our mum's first cousin, June and her little daughter, Dawn came down to visit from Broome. This picture reflects the different tensions that existed at the moment of this photograph. The tensions are between those that were comfortable with their Indigenous heritage and those that were oblivious to the situation. My sister and I remember playing 'chasey' with 'Dawnie' when she turned around to us and asked "Didn't you know you were Aboriginal?" My sister and I had never been drawn to notice this before and it was the first time we knew that we were different from other families.

Julie Dowling

4. The Gauntlet, 2004

acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas, 120x100cm

\$20000

This picture is from a photograph taken of my grandmother and grandfather taking my mother, Uncle Robert, Auntie Barbara and Auntie Pat (in the pram) to Perth. Near the old Post Office, an Italian man would take photographs for people walking along the street. It was 1953 and on this trip to town my grandmother and grandfather were buying new clothes. Under my grandfather's arm is a package carrying my grandmother's old dress that she changed out of at Boans department store.

The gauntlet means they had to face the gaze of mainly white people. My grandmother stood out with my grandfather as an Aboriginal woman. Nana felt happy because she looked acceptable and relieved that they were going home. It wasn't long after this photograph that they went to our Great grandmother's property in Coorow and escaped Perth's enforced curfews and native welfare attention. The colour of the eye pupils corresponds with the city features of concrete and masonry. The gauntlet refers to the saying "running the gauntlet" within your enemy's camp to speak to the leader of your enemy.

Julie Dowling

5. This side of the fence, 2004

acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas, 100x120cm

\$20000

From left to right: Great Uncle Arthur, Great Auntie Violet, my Grandmother Mary, Great Auntie Dot (Dorothy) and Cousin Elsie. *In front:* the two little boys are Great Auntie Vi's boys, Rollie and Rodney. Arthur, Violet, Mary and Dot are brother and sisters. Elsie and the two little boys are Violet's children.

This painting shows my grandmother and Great Auntie Dot on a visit to their brother and sister as part of an official visit arranged by the Saint Joseph's Orphanage. This painting was made from a small original photograph used by the orphanage to demonstrate to the Native Welfare Department that my Grandmother and Great Auntie Dot had family that were 'assimilated' into white society. Everyone except my grandmother looks uneasy and unhappy. Cousin's Rollie and Rodney were later put into care at Sister Kate's home for half-caste children.

This side of the fence is about the fence as a symbolic divide between a 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' view of my family. Our family was positioned as those of the acceptable few as seen by the authorities of the time. My grandmother wanted to be a Nun and presented a persona of someone who accepted these notions of white racial superiority. Ironically, Nana is the only one appearing to be happy to the viewer.

Julie Dowling

6. The Invincibles, 2004

acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas, 100x120cm

\$20000

Text:

Two quotes about the team.

“...these poor natives, so hideous to look at...” by the founder of New Norcia Mission, Lord Abbot Dom Salvado who introduced the game of cricket to the Aboriginal people forced to live on the mission.

“....and wherever the team went it was treated as a body of sportsmen and gentlemen, for such is the Kingdom of cricket.” By amateur anthropologist, Daisy Bates who recalled the New Norcia Team in a 1924 article in *The Australasian* newspaper.

Painting:

A Spanish Benedictine monk introduced the ‘civilizing’ game of cricket to the New Norcia Mission Indigenous population in 1879. Exhibition matches were organised to demonstrate the successful assimilation techniques of the mission. These matches were held for the amusement of the white population in Perth but caused frustration amongst their white competitors when this team consistently won every game. The players were forced to walk from New Norcia mission to Perth and were paraded before every game. The Prime Minister John Howard’s cricket team in Canberra ironically also uses the name ‘Invincibles’. I wanted to demonstrate the invincibility of Aboriginal men and to provide a message of pride to their descendants and our community. Indeed, we, as the first people of this land are invincible.

List of the Invincibles;

Standing at rear, left to right: Patrick Yapo, John Walley, Benedict Caper, Anthony Nelabut, Alec Wegnola(or Wanola) (Captain)

Sitting front row: Paul Jater, John Blurton, H.S. Lefroy (non-Aboriginal Coach). Frederick Yrbel, Joseph Nogolot.

Sitting lower front right: Felix Jackimara, James Eagan

Julie Dowling

7. Learning how to be stupid, 2004

acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas, 120x100cm

\$20000

This picture is from a small photograph taken on Christmas day at my grandfather and grandmother's house when I was five years old.

In the foreground, is my grandfather, Robert 'Nanpop' Dowling from the back view. From left to right is my Auntie Liz, Uncle John when they were teenagers. My twin sister, Carol, is sitting without a t-shirt on. I am sitting next to her next to my first cousin, Bruce. We are all sitting eating our Christmas lunch prepared by 'Nana' who is about to walk into the kitchen in the background.

This picture is about the celebration of Christmas, which seemed to be fractured to me as a child. Christmas then was always fleeting and momentary, expressing the hypocrisy of such a Christian ceremony. I always felt that this was the time we were 'supposed' to be happy and we always knew that these times were rare. My Uncle Robert was mentally ill and would often be violent. This is a powerful image of Christmas because it was the last time we shared it together before my grandfather died a few months later.

This image shows my Uncle John about to be told off by my grandmother for allowing my Auntie Liz to put a Christmas streamer 'popper' in his mouth. He was trying to make us children laugh for the camera. It is as if we are learning from them that it was all right to be stupid or joke around while our Uncle Robert was not around. It is as if this western tradition seemed odd in context to the way we lived our lives for the rest of the year. This is reflected in the Christmas star with its jagged plastic glitter with tiny tear drops coming from its points.

Julie Dowling

7. Warridah II, 2004

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 91x72cm

\$9000

This picture shows the black Wedged-tailed Eagle known to my family as the Warridah. The brown is known to be the colour of the female bird.

The survival of Warridah is an indicator of the survival or impact on environmental damage in our country. Not so long ago, Warridah lived on small game and was strong enough to bring down and kill adult Kangaroos. Today, with the number of Kangaroos dropping due to drought and most small game disappearing all together, the biggest killer of Warridah is starvation. They now survive on road-kill carcasses and their numbers are falling rapidly.

The bird in this picture is showing the gesture of the body, as it is about to fly off to catch prey having viewed it over its shoulder. I wanted this bird to be as if still surviving in nature.

Julie Dowling**8. The Boat People, 2004**

acrylic, red ochre & plastic on canvas, 120x100cm

\$20000

This painting shows my twin sister, Carol and I in our first year, living in our grandmother's house. It shows the influence of Christianity with the crucifix on the fire mantelpiece. The emphasis of the plastic boat-like shape of the baby's bath is important to me because it was given to my mother by the hospital because we were poor. It was almost a foreign object to us.

In the bath is Carol and my grandmother, Mary 'Nana' Dowling, is drying me with a towel.

One of my students once told me that 'boat people' is a humorous name for non-Aboriginal people during the era that I was born. It was humorous because it was during this time that refugees from Vietnam were arriving on Australian shores seeking assistance. I wanted to make a statement about how refugees are being treated today and to call attention to the fact that many non-Aboriginal people who colonised this country were in fact originally refugees from Europe. The phrase "a touch of the tar-brush" is called to mind where its opposite could be "a touch of the boat people" where my sister and I are concerned.

Julie Dowling**8. Stolpersteine (Stumbling Stones), 2004**

oil on canvas, 51x107cm

\$7500

For/from my Widi ancestors, For/from my German ancestors

This painting is strongly influenced by a Jewish Holocaust memorial project conceived by artist Gunter Demnig who became concerned that some Germans were losing sight of crimes committed in their backyards. Demnig devised and installed 3,300 brass plaques into street paving throughout 30 German cities commemorating the exact locations and streets where roughly six million Jews perished in the genocidal fury of Hitler's final solution. Demnig entitled these plaques 'Stolpersteine' meaning stumbling stones so that any ordinary street in Germany is suddenly transformed into a walk across the stage of history.

I believe that the ever-increasing threat from salinity and water quality in Western Australia will be the stumbling stones for all Australians. This damage reminds us all that without the care and respect for country afforded by Indigenous Australians for thousands of years, the land will teach us about history and what was done to our knowledge and ways as custodians of country. Such genocide of knowledge continues today and is dramatically reflected to me as a Badimaya woman when seeing salinity affect our once diverse ecology found around Lake Moore. This picture is a homage to its continued beauty and its warning of our future. At projected costs of \$600 million a year and rising, farmers and conservationist state that combating salinity is a losing battle.

Julie Dowling**9. The Citizen King, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 100x120cm

\$20000

This is a representation of a photograph of the moment Beaufort Diner, was granted his Australian citizenship as a prize for a boxing championship. He was recognised to be a King of his people by Wudjula (non-Aboriginal) people. The 'ol' boys' to his right were also friends of my great Uncle George Latham when he was also a boxer. My Uncle remembers those times in the following saying "If you were a quarter-caste you were treated as a fourth-class citizen. If you were a full-blood you were treated far worse".

This painting illustrates the dichotomy of what it took for our men folk to be acceptable or tolerated by the dominant white culture and society of the time. I believe these attitudes are still below the surface of the social majority. Our men are still measured for their acceptability by their physical prowess rather than for something more important. We are not recognised for our own governance as Indigenous peoples of this land. Instead, we are included as an ethnic minority, dictated to by dominant discourses of who we are 'allowed to be'.

Julie Dowling**10. Just because you feel it, doesn't mean it's true!, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 100x120cm

\$16500

This painting is an interpretative work about my reaction to the closure of ATSIC and the treatment of Indigenous people all over the world in relation to their sovereignty and law. In this present time, 13% of the world's population holds 80% of the world's wealth. Australia and the USA refuse to join the international criminal court because of their human rights violations against their own citizens including Indigenous peoples. Yet both countries rely on their judicial systems to justify their actions.

The statement "just because you feel it, doesn't mean its true" was a statement always thrown at me in debates at university about post-modern theory. It is the crux to why I will always be viewed as post-colonial. I question such positioning of my work.

Julie Dowling**11. Warridah I, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 92x71cm

\$9000

This picture shows the black Wedged-tailed Eagle known to my family as the Warridah. The black is known to be the colour of the male bird.

The survival of Warridah is an indicator of the survival or impact on environmental damage in our country. Not so long ago, Warridah lived on small game and was strong enough to bring down and kill adult Kangaroos. Today, with the number of Kangaroos dropping due to drought and most small game disappearing all together, the biggest killer of Warridah is starvation. They now survive on road-kill carcasses and their numbers are falling rapidly.

The bird depicted is displaying the stance of a partially wild bird which is used in a bird tourist park in Margaret River. It shows the bird frustrated and eager as it is about to be let loose. The keeper said that these birds are 'easy to train because they know that survival is a risky game in the wild'.

Julie Dowling**14. Mount Gibson- Looking North-East, 2004**

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 20x60cm

\$2500

This picture shows Mount Gibson jutting out facing west. To the south of this hill is a gold mine. My ancestors followed this series of hills for seasonal camps. In the caves they camped for thousands of years following a dreaming journey that took them right to the banks of Lake Moore and back again. This journey stretched out for 35,000 square kilometres.

Julie Dowling

15. Mount Gibson-South West, 2004

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 20x60cm

\$2500

This picture is taken from a photograph taken on the journey back from a Native Title meeting in Mount Magnet. This view reminds me of the distance I experience from my country at times and how my elders are growing older. I worry that I will lose knowledge about this sacred place.

Julie Dowling

16. New Gulewa, 2004

acrylic and red ochre on canvas, 20x60cm

\$2500

This is the place where my great grandmother, Mary Oliver was born. It was the site of one of the first gold prospecting camps in WA. It is where my great great grandmother, Melbin was taken by her colonial 'husband', Edward Oliver.

Julie Dowling

17. Butchers Rock- Birth Place, 2004

acrylic & red ochre on canvas, 20x60cm

\$2500

This is the place where my great aunts and great uncles were born. We do not know why it was called Butcher's rock. Women gave birth to their babies in the caves.