

Lorna Fencer Napurrula 1920 – 2006

Area: Lajamanu, NT
Language: Warlpiri/Ngaliya

Dreamings: Bush Potato (yarla), Caterpillar (luju), Bush Tomato, Bush Plum, Wallaby Tucker

Whilst Lorna "painted up" all her life, meaning that she was raised as a skilled painter of decorative body designs for ceremonies, her artworks on canvas only date from 1986. Lorna initiated her rise in the art world by painting for the Warnayaka Art Centre, Northern Territory. In recent years, Lorna's work has become increasingly extravagant, abstract and sensual, catching the attention of art collectors from around the world and giving rise to comparisons with the late Emily Kame Kngwarreye.

Lorna typically paints with acrylics on primed Belgium linen or unstretched cotton duck. Very occasionally she will also paint onto primed art boards. Her artifacts include coolamons, kudurru (fighting sticks), quartz rocks and slate.

Lorna's style is extremely bold, free and abstract. She applies the paint in liberal quantities to the brush before touching down on the canvas and layering the colours one upon the next. Upon completion of the work, only the most public aspects of her Dreaming are revealed to the observer, the most intimate details are concealed. Lorna, atypical of many contemporary Aboriginal artists, also uses a palette of vibrant colours.



Lorna's artistic achievements have been recognized by her inclusion in the Murdoch Court at the National Gallery of Victoria and her invitation to participate in the triennial 1998 John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize.

In 1991 her work was included in a group exhibition "Aboriginal Art" shown in the Australian Embassy Washington, USA. In the same year, Lorna was included in "Aboriginal Art & Spirituality," curated by Rosemary Crumlin & Anthony Knight in Canberra



'Bush Potato' (Nganama) in progress. 21FirstSt gallery. November 2000.

In 1997 the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, hosted "Women's Body Paint" and "Paint Up Big: Walpiri Women's Art From Lajamanu" group exhibitions. The National Gallery acquired some of Lorna's finest works following the exhibitions. Growing popularity increased Lorna's profile during 1998 and gave rise to a solo exhibition of her work, "Yulyulu," at Alcaston House Gallery in Melbourne. As recent as late 1999 her works featured in the Indigenous Art of the Dreamtime held in the main foyer of the United Nations Building New York, USA.

During 1998 the Australian Heritage Commission Collection, Canberra, acquired some of her works, and today Lorna's art is also held in the Christensen Collections of Victoria; Holmes a Court Collection of Western Australia; and by a number of fine art galleries and private collectors around Australia and abroad.

Group Exhibitions

- 1988** People, Place & Art, Hilton Hotel, Adelaide.
1990 Paint Up Big, National Gallery of Victoria.
1991 Aboriginal Art & Spirituality, High Court of Australia, ACT;
Aboriginal Art, Australian Embassy, Washington, USA.
1994 Yapakurlangu Virrkardu, Batchelor College, Tenant Creek, NT
1996 All About Art, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne;
Rainbow Serpent, Vaucluse, NSW.
1997 Woman's Body Paintings from Lajamanu, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne;
Recent Acquisitions, NGV, Melbourne.
1998 John McCaughey Memorial Art Prize, NGV, Melbourne;
Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra.
1999 Gondwana Gallerie, Rome, Italy;
Tjinyipjila Exhibition, Australian Embassy, Washington D.C., USA;
Indigenous Art of the Dreamtime, United Nations Building, New York, USA.

Solo Exhibitions

- 1997** Me Warlpiri, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.
1998 Yulyulu, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.
1999 St. Valentine's Exhibition, Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane;
Tracks Across the Landscape, Land Rover Showroom, Sydney;
'Wild' Warlpiri Woman, Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery, Sydney;
Yapa, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.

Awards

- 1997** Winner, Gold Coast City Art Award;
Conrad Jupiters Casino, Gold Coast.
1998 John McCaughey Memorial Art Award;
Commissioned artist National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Collections

- Christensen Collection, Museum of Victoria, Melbourne
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- The Holmes a Court Collection, Perth
- Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
- Artbank, Sydney
- Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Queensland
- Gantner Myer Collection
- Margaret Carnegie Collection
- Laverty Collection, Sydney