

EVERYWHEN ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Niningka Munkuri Lewis



Birth Date	01/01/1945
Birth Place	North of Areyonga
Language	Pitjantjatjara

Niningka was born in the bush in 1945 at a place north of Areyonga. Her parents had previously come to live at Ernabella but were on holiday on foot, as people would do every year still at that time. As a baby she came to Ernabella and grew up here, accompanying her family on annual holidays to many places such as Angus Downs, Curtin Springs and Imanpa.

After school she worked at the Ernabella Mission craft room, where Winifred Hilliard taught her how to spin sheep's wool and weave rugs. She moved to Amata as a young woman and worked in the clinic before settling in Kalka where she married and had one son.

She moved then to nearby Kalka where she developed her skills in batik, and went on to be one of the supervisors for the Kalka women's centre. It was around the same time, in 1997, that Niningka was introduced to coiled basketry.

Niningka is also an expert woodcarver, who made punu carvings for Maruku Arts at Uluru. She often decorates her baskets with these small figurative carvings, or other applied decorations like emu feathers, ininti seeds, and overstitched or embroidered designs, as well as brightly coloured wool/raffia patterns woven into her baskets. Her talents as a sculptor are also apparent in the range of forms she creates from baskets, hats, sandals, cups, saucepans, birds and even small motor cars.

Niningka made the first life-sized grass figure for the Tjanpi Manguri Weaving exhibition in 2000 that anticipated the Tjanpi Desert Weavers' move into figurative sculpture-making. This saw them win the NATSIAAs with their tjanpi Toyota sculpture. Niningka is highly regarded for her innovative creativity.

When Niningka's husband sadly passed away, she came back to Ernabella to be at home and to spend time with her older sister, Pantjiti Lionel. She now works at the Ernabella art centre again, painting, making tjanpi, punu, mukata (beans) and ceramics.

Niningka has been concentrating on her painting at the art centre since 2009. This has seen her Highly Commended in the painting section of the 2010 NATSIAAs and in 2011 she had her first solo exhibition, at Melbourne's Alcaston Gallery.

EVERYWHEN ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Niningka has worked with tjanpi desert weavers on recent collaborations which have been exhibited at the MCA in Sydney, the Art Gallery of South Australia and Tarrawarra 2014 Biennale.

In 2015 Niningka experimented for the first time using resin, incorporating resin sculptures into contemporary jewellery. Her contemporary jewellery work has been exhibited at JamFactory, Adelaide, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art and Whistlewood, Victoria.

In 2014 and 2015 she had solo exhibitions at Tunbridge Gallery, WA. In 2016 Niningka along with five other Ernabella women created a collaborative tjanpi work that was shortlisted for the NATSIAAs.

Solo Exhibitions

2016 Niningka Lewis : My stories - Tunbridge Gallery, Perth WA

2014 Niningka Lewis - Tunbridge Gallery, Perth WA

2011 Ara irititja munu ara kuwaritja Ernabella-la - Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC

Group Exhibitions

2016 Nganampa Kililpi Kuwartija Tjuta pakani: Our Rising Stars - Hazelhurst Regional Community Gallery, NSW

2016 Nganampa Kililpil: Our Stars - Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

2016 Inheritance - Salt Contemporary, Queenscliff, VIC

2016 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre

2016 Spring Salon + Art Parade McCulloch & McCulloch - Whistlewood, Shoreham, VIC

2016 Malpa Wiru - Signal Point Gallery

2016 Art from the APY Lands - Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane, QLD

2016 ARTMART 2016: Resin, Rubber and Other Potent Means - Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin, NT

2016 Launch Exhibition, The Indigenous Jewellery Project + Autumn Salon - Whistlewood, Shoreham, VIC

2015 Tjukurpa Kunpu / Strong Culture: HOLIDAY SHOW 2015-2016 - Harvey Art Projects, USA

2015 Our Mob - Adelaide Festival Centre

2015 Jewellery has always been here - Jam Factory, Adelaide

2015 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre

2014 Desert Mob 2014 - Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT

2014 Pilanypa - Harvey Art Projects, Idaho USA

2014 Whisper in My Mask, TarraWarra Biennial

2014 - TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville VIC 2014 Bold and the Beautiful - Talapi, Alice Springs

2014 Eastern APY Lands: ArtKelch - Touring Freiburg, Munich, Hamburg and Bodensee, Germany

2013 Desert Mob 2013 - Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT

2013 String Theory, Focus on Contemporary Australian Art - MCA, Sydney NSW

2013 Putitja: From the Bush - Strathnairn Arts, Canberra ACT

2013 Nyinninga: the Cold Time of the Year - Harvey Art Projects, Idaho, USA

2012 Tjamuku Kamiku Tjukurpa - Outstation Gallery, Darwin NT

2012 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs NT

2012 Wanampi, Ngintaka and Other Epic Stories - Talapi Gallery, Alice Springs NT

2012 Kapi Ukalinganyi - Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney NSW

2011 Tjukurpa Irititja, Walka Kuwaritja - Marshall Arts, Adelaide SA

2011 Ernabella Arts Kuwari - Chapman Gallery, Canberra ACT

2011 Ernabella Undiscovered - Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River WA

2011 Strong Women Strong Painting Strong Culture - Cessnock Regional Art Gallery, Hunter Valley NSW

2011 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs NT

2011 Tjukurpa nyangatja ngananala unngu ngaranyi - Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney NSW

EVERYWHEN ART

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EVERYWHEN ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

2010 Ngura Nganampa (Our Country) - Outstation Gallery, Darwin, NT
2010 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Awards - Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory, Darwin NT
2010 Recent Paintings - Chapman Gallery, Manuka, ACT
2010 Kayili and Ernabella 2010 - Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, NSW
2010 Ara irititja munu ara kuwaritja Ernabella-la - Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC
2010 Ngayuku Nguru - JamFactory, Adelaide SA
2010 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT
2010 Generation Next - Randell Lane Fine Art, Perth, WA
2009 Celebrating Country: Kinship & Culture - Seymour College, Adelaide, SA
2009 Our Mob - Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide, SA
2009 Desert Mob - Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT (with Tjanpi Desert Weavers and Ernabella Arts)
2009 Kuru Alala - Gold Coast City Art Gallery, Surfers Paradise, QLD
2009 Menagerie - Object Gallery and Australian Museum, Sydney, NSW
2008 Anangu Backyard - Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide, SA
2008 Desert Mob - Araluen Centre, Alice Springs, NT (with Tjanpi Desert Weavers and Ernabella Arts) Alice Springs (with Maruku Arts)
2007 Tjanpi Tjuta - Fabric of Life/Adelaide Fringe Festival, Adelaide, SA
2007 Recoil: Change and Exchange in Coiled Fibre Art - Araluen Centre, Alice Springs (then touring 2008, 2009, 2010)
2006 Artist in Residence - Mulgara Gallery, Yulara, NT
2001 Ripe - 24 Hour Art, Darwin & Watch this space, Alice Springs, NT
2000 Essential Truths, Readily to Hand - Adelaide Festival, Adelaide, SA
1999 Dry Lands Further Out - Hill City Gallery, NSW (with Maruku Arts)
1999 Die Welt der Aborigines - Galerie Handwerk, Munich, Germany (with Maruku Arts)
1998 SOFA - Chicago, USA (with Maruku Arts) 1998- 2002
1992 Desert Crafts - Hogarth Galleries, NSW (with Maruku Arts)
1992 Maruku Arts and Craft Exhibition - Parliament House, Canberra (with Maruku Arts)
1989 Minymaku: Work of the NPY Womens Council - Araluen Centre, Alice Springs (with Maruku Arts)

Themes

Malara (Part of the Rainbow Serpent Tjukurpa)
Mission days in Ernabella
Old way/New way - Changing culture for Anangu Pitjantjatjara Travel and hunting in the Toyota

Collections

ARALUEN ARTS, 2010
ART GALLERY OF NSW, SYDNEY, 2008 2012
ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, 2010, 2012
ARTBANK, 2009, 2012
AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, 2010
OBJECT GALLERY, NSW, 2008
W. & V. MCGEOCH, 2011

Awards

2016 Finalist (collaborative), NATSIAA

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EVERYWHEN
ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

2012 Finalist, Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award