

EVERYWHEN ART ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Barbara Weir



Birth date: 1945

Birth place: Utopia, NT

Language: Alyawarre, Anmatyerre

Born around 1945, Barbara Weir's mother was Minnie Pwerle and her father Jack Weir, the white lessee of a cattle station adjoining her mother's country.

Barbara Weir had a unique relationship with Emily Kame Kngwarreye who was her main carer as a child before she was removed from her home by the Native Welfare Patrol at the age of nine. After years of living with various families and attending schools all over Australia, not remembering the origin of her birthplace, she rediscovered it after some years of searching in the 1960s. The first person she met on her return to Utopia was her cousin, artist Kathleen Petyarre. It took Weir some years to relearn the language and to re-establish a relationship with her mother, during which time she again became extremely close to Emily Kngwarreye. By the 1980s, Weir had become a fluent Anmatyerre and Alyawarre speaker, the first female member of the Aboriginal Land Council and had been instrumental in the Utopia people's successful land rights claim in 1975. In 1985 she was the first woman president of the region's Urapuntja Council.

She was one of the younger women of the Utopia batik school and in 1994 travelled to Indonesia with the group to work with traditional batik makers. She started painting around 1994 and has since become a highly popular and successful artist, travelling to exhibitions of her work held around Australia and internationally.

All of Weir's paintings are representations of the once fertile lands of her mother's country at a time when plants, animals and water (including that considered sacred) were plentiful. Themes of her paintings include grass seed, bush berry, wild flowers and Awelye (women's body design). Her two main painting themes are those of grass seeds and an encyclopaedic, evolving series entitled My Mother's Country. These finely-crafted paintings depict waterholes, sacred sites, coolamons, digging sticks, spirit figure/creation ancestors and lines of travel, all but obscured under veil-like layers of fine dots.

Recent works have seen Barbara incorporate ash from her country in her paint, resulting in some incredible textures and subtle hues in her work.

Barbara Weir's exhibition history is extensive, and anyone who has the pleasure of spending time with Barbara will hear of her vast travels throughout America, Europe and Asia to paint and exhibit her work. As Barbara enters her 70s, she shows no signs of slowing down and continues a considerable travel and exhibition schedule. She remains a great inspiration to those around her.

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In January 2009, Barbara was listed in the top 50 of Australia's most collectable artists in the Australian Art Collector Magazine, alongside Emily Kame Kngwarreye and a handful of other indigenous artists. She is a highly collectible artist, and one that continues to grow in stature.

Weir's daughters, Teresa Purla and Charmaine Pwerle and son Freddy Purla are also painters.

Exhibitions

1995, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009 Dacou Gallery, Adelaide
1995, Davis Avenue Gallery, Melbourne
1996, 2002, Framed Gallery, Darwin
1996, Gallery Woo Mang and Partners, Paris, France
1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2006, 2007, 2008 Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
1996, 1997, 1998, 2008 Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane
1997, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
1997, Hogarth Galleries, Sydney
1997, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
1997, Barry Stern Gallery, Sydney
1998, ARTEXPO, New York, USA
1998, 2001, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
1998, Adelaide Festival Theatre, Adelaide
1998, Exhibited extensively in Europe including: Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands
1999, 2002, Japingka Gallery, Perth
1999, 2000, 2001, Tandanya, Adelaide
1999, 2000, 2002, 2006 Gallery Savah, Sydney
2000, ArtSauce, Singapore
2000, Redback Art Gallery, Brisbane
2000, AMP Building, Sydney
2000, "Women's Business", Chicago, USA
2001, Mbantua Gallery, Alice Springs
2002, Knut Grothe Galeri, Charlottlenlund, Copenhagen, Denmark
2003, Alison Kelly Gallery, Melbourne
2003, Glen Eira City Council Gallery, Melbourne
2004, Addison Road Gallery, Marrickville, NSW.
2004, Mbantua Gallery (USA exhibition: Portland, Nashville, Knoxville, Hartford, Greenwich, Philadelphia and New York).
2006, APS Bendi Lango Art Exhibition, Rio Tinto Offices, Melbourne.
2007, Australian Embassy, Washington, USA.
2007, "New Works from Utopia", Space Gallery, Pittsburgh, USA
2008, Gecko Gallery, Broome.
2008, "Walking Together to Aid Aboriginal Health", Shalom Gamarada Aboriginal Art Exhibition, University of NSW, Kensington, NSW.
2008, "Utopia Revisited", NG Art Gallery, Chippendale, NSW.
2008, "Dreamings – The Land", Outback Aboriginal Land, Caulfield, VIC.
2008, Red Rock Gallery, Beijing, China.
2009, Janet Holmes a Court Gallery, Perth.
2009, "Utopia, Colours of the Desert", Gongpyeong Art Space in collaboration with Dacou,

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Australian Embassy in Korea and Crossbay Gallery, Seoul, Korea.

2010, "In the Footprints of Barbara Weir", Central Art, Alice Springs

2012, "Barbara Weir", Kate Owen Gallery, NSW

2016 Spring Salon & Art Parade, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

2017 'Atnwengerrp Revisited' Family Show and Artist in Residence Program – Kate Owen Gallery, Sydney

2019 Colours of my Country, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

2020 Summer Collector's Show 2020, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

2020 In Black and White, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

2021 Summer Collector's Show 2021, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

2022 New Utopia: Leading and Next Gen Artists from Utopia, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC

Collections

Art Gallery Of South Australia

National Gallery of Victoria

Holmes a Court Collection Hitachi Collection

Macquarie Bank Collection

Queensland College Of Art Griffith University

The University Of Adelaide

AMP Collection