



Rammey Ramsey

B. 1935, Bow River Station, The Kimberley, WA

BIOGRAPHY:

Rammey Ramsey, a senior Gija man of Jungurra skin, was born on Old Greenvale Station which is now part of Bow River Station. His own country and that of his parents is a part of Gija country in an area to the west of Bedford Downs near Elgee Cliffs. His Gija name, Warlawoon is the general name for the whole of that area of country.

Rammey Ramsey lived in Warlawoon country walking in the bush with his family when very young then moved to Bedford Downs and worked there as a young man. He spent some time working at Landsdowne Station. He then moved to Bow River Station and has lived there ever since.

Rammey was a key figure in the production of the Bedford Downs massacre Joonba (coroborree) that was staged at the 2000 Telstra Art Award. He is an inspired dancer who helped train the young boys in dancing. He and Rusty Peters made the dance poles used in the original Joonba.

He was also an actor and dancer with the Neminuwarlin Performance Group in its production of Fire, Fire Burning Bright, incorporating the Joonba which premiered at the Perth International Festival of the Arts in February 2002 and opened the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts at the State Theatre of Victoria from 17-20 October 2002.

Rammey Ramsey is true to his law painting only country that he has rights to through birth and family. Most of his paintings are of the stunning gorge country north west of Halls Creek in an area surrounding Elgee Cliffs. He shows the places where the Rock Wallaby live and camping areas near waterholes. The painting and the man are the essence of strength and tenderness. The paint is applied with love and vigour, the dots like pearls stitched on a bed of pink and black raw silk. Images of cliffs, hills, rock wallaby holes, camping places, rivers, rocks in the river bed, waterholes, roads, stockyards and meeting places appear as distillations of important features of the landscape. A line might be a road or a river, a circle a waterhole, a place or a cave, a rectangle stock yards or hills.

In paintings new red paintings, the artist has evolved the dynamics of his artistic language. Red paint that once surrounded the black representational forms of hills, rivers and stockyards are now atmospheric fields that move in degrees from white pink and red. The artist observing his great friend Paddy Bedford painting, commented one morning that he wished to paint the Ngarranggarni way - meaning in technical terms the mixing of wet in wet of two colours on the surface of the canvas to create the gestural strokes and rhythm of the brush - spiritually a way to represent the four elements of life, earth, wind, fire and water. These new paintings are not the usual representations of country but

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24 Howie Street London SW11 4AY
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are an important development in Gija art because they also convey the language of natural elements, so crucial in Aboriginal communication and foreseeing of events.

In 2013, Rammey was featured in Gija Manambarram Jimerawoon (Gija Senior Law People Forever) in an exhibition at the Australian Embassy in Paris. In 2015, he was a finalist in the 32nd Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, and in 2017, his work from the Jirrawun era was featured in the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of the TARNANTHI Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art. He also began to return to using natural pigments and ochres during this time, after having experimented with bright acrylic paints in previous years.

Rammey continues his art practice at Juwulinji (Bow River), and often commutes to the Warmun Art Centre to bring in his new pieces. He retains some bright acrylics which can be seen dispersed throughout paintings of distinctive ochre backgrounds, revisiting Warlawoon in the minimalistic and inimitable way that Rammey sees it.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2011 New Work by Rammey Ramsey, Seva Frangos Gallery, Perth, WA
- 2004 Rammey Ramsey - Deeper than paint on canvas, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
- 2003 Rammey Ramsey, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, NT
- 2001 Rammey Ramsey - RAFT Artspace, Darwin, NT

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2020 Ngarranggarni, JGM Gallery, London, UK
- 2020 Badem Mawoondool - red ochre, white ochre, Aboriginal Contemporary, Sydney, NSW
- 2019 "Manparra" Big Boss Man - Male Masters Show, Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
- 2019 "Our Land Our Place" NAIDOC Week exhibition by Artitja Fine Art - Government House, Perth, WA
- 2019 Earthworks - JGM Gallery, London, UK
- 2019 Desert River Sea, Art Gallery of Western Australia - A landmark exhibition of Kimberley Aboriginal Art, Art Gallery of WA
- 2019 Beyond the surface of the Dreaming - Warmun & Jirrawun - Aboriginal Signature, Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
- 2018 Jooroob "Coming Together" Exhibition - Warmun Art and Jirrawun Artworks curated by Nichola Dare, Aboriginal Contemporary
- 2018 GIJA Exhibition, Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Queensland - An exhibition honouring the Warmun artists, and 20 years of the Gija art movement, QLD
- 2018 Warmun At Twenty Exhibition - A group exhibition celebrating 20 years of Warmun Art Centre, Nancy Sever Gallery, Canberra, ACT
- 2017 Jirrawun Collection - TARNANTHI Festival, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, SA
- 2017 When The Sky Fell - Legacies of the 1967 Referendum - Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, WA
- 2017 Spiritual essence of the Earth with Warmun artists - Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
- 2015 LIVELY: New Prints from Warmun Arts - Nomad Arts, Darwin NT
- 2015 32nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum and Art Gallery

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- of the Northern Territory Darwin, NT
- 2014 Warmun: Gija Contemporary Art of Western Australia - Harvey Art Projects, USA
- 2013 Gija Manambarram Jimerawoon (Gija Senior Law People Forever) - Australian Embassy Paris, France
- 2010 Four Men, Four Paintings, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, NT
- 2010 Gaagembi - Poor Things, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC
- 2006 Jirrawun Artists - Melbourne Art Fair, William Mora Galleries in association with Jirrawun Arts
- 2005 Jirrawun in the House A Contemporary Experience from the East Kimberley - Parliament House, Canberra, ACT
- 2005 Beyond the Frontier, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, NSW
- 2003 Jirrawun Jazz, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, NT

AWARDS & COMMISSIONS:

- 2015 32nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award
- 2014 Alice Prize Finalist

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