



# Phyllis Thomas

B. 1933, Riyarr, Turner River, Pilbara Region WA, Australia

## BIOGRAPHY:

Phyllis Thomas was born at a place called Riyarr on the Turner River, south east of Purnululu. When young she worked on Turner Station looking after poultry, gardening, grinding salt and carting water from the well. However she often preferred to run away into the bush with the old women to hunt, collect dingo scalps and look for gold.

Phyllis is a Gija woman of Nagarra skin whose bush name, Booljoonngali, means 'big rain coming down with lots of wind'.

She began painting when Freddie Timms set up the Jirrawun Aboriginal Arts group in 1998. Her work achieved almost immediate success, depicting Ngarranggarni (Dreaming) places and bush tucker from Roogoon (Crocodile Hole) area as well as the country around the middle reaches of the Ord and Turner Rivers where she was born. Phyllis was represented in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) in 1999 with a stunning picture of Boornbem Goorlem, Hot Water Spring II.

Her work has been acquired by a number of collectors and galleries including a special focus purchase of five paintings by the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) in 2000. Her painting The Escape was highly commended in the seventeenth NATSIAA in 2000, and was purchased as part of the Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory's Telstra Collection. An eight panel series on the same subject was shown at Raft Artspace in Darwin in 2002 and was purchased by AGWA in 2003.

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2018 Wynne Prize Finalist, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia
- 2017 Spiritual essence of the Earth with Warmun artists - Aboriginal Signature Estrangin gallery, Brussels, Belgium
- 2017 For the Women - Tandanya, Adelaide, Australia
- 2016 Telling Tales: Excursions in narrative form - Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia, Australia
- 2015 Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning - Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia
- 2014 Garnkiny: Constellations of Meaning - Melbourne VIC, Australia
- 2014 Warmun: Gija Contemporary Art of Western Australia - Harvey Art Projects, USA
- 2014 Warmun Aboriginal Art - Art Images Gallery, Adelaide, SA, Australia
- 2013 Nagarra & Naangari - Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
- 2012 Earth: Ochre Painting from Warmun - Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland, NZ

# JGM GALLERY

24 Howie Street London SW11 4AY  
T +44 (0)207 228 6027 E info@jmgallery.com W www.jmgallery.com

- 
- 2011 Where Knowledge Comes From - Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA, Australia  
 2011 (Re) - Currents of Warrambany - Gecko Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia  
 2010 Ochres of the Kimberley - Tunbridge Gallery, Margaret River, WA, Australia  
 2010 Surface of Our Dreaming - Paintings by Gija Women - Chapman Gallery, Canberra, ACT, Australia  
 2010 Warmun - Our Earth Our Story - Art Images Gallery, Norwood, SA, Australia  
 2010 Putipula Gallery - Noosa, QLD, Australia  
 2010 Big Country - Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, NT 2010 Framed Gallery - Darwin, NT, Australia  
 2009 Warmun Ochres: Rich Earth - Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA 2007 Warmun Snapshot, Aboriginal Art Fair - Darwin, NT, Australia  
 2007 Dog Dreamings - Seva Frangos Art, Perth, WA, Australia  
 2006 Bungle Bungles, Short St. Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia  
 2006 Warmun Arts - Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, WA, Australia  
 2005 Warmun Women's Show, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, VIC, Australia  
 2005 Gija: Across The Border, Raft Artspace, Darwin, NT, Australia  
 2005 Warmun Group Show, Framed Gallery, Darwin, NT, Australia  
 2005 Waterhole Country, Short St. Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia  
 2005 New Work From Warmun, Gadfly Gallery, Perth, WA, Australia  
 2004 Big Country Show, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, NT, Australia  
 2002 Warmun Group Show, Flinders University Art Museum, SA, Australia  
 2001 Beyond Wings, Flinders University Art Museum, Adelaide, SA, Australia  
 2001 Short on Size, Short St. Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia  
 2001 Ochres, Short St Gallery, Broome, WA, Australia  
 2001 New Paintings from Warmun Art Centre, Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane, QLD, Australia  
 2000 The Seventeenth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Darwin, NT, Australia  
 1999 My Country - Northern Territory University, Darwin, NT, Australia  
 1999 New art from the Kimberley - William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC, Australia  
 1999 The Seventeenth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Darwin, Australia  
 1998 Jirrawun Artists - William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC, Australia  
 1998 Jirrawun Artists from Crocodile Hole - Gemma Stowe, Perth, WA, Australia

#### **AWARDS:**

- 2015 32nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award

#### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- 1996 Ngalangangpum Jarrakpu Purrurn: Mother and Child, Margaret Stewart, Magabala Books, Broome, WA

## **JGM GALLERY**

24 Howie Street London SW11 4AY  
 T +44 (0)207 228 6027 E [info@jmgallery.com](mailto:info@jmgallery.com) W [www.jmgallery.com](http://www.jmgallery.com)