

About Munganbana



While there are a number of artists whose work is carried in the gallery, the majority of the artwork is by the artist owner, Munganbana. Munganbana displays a unique style combining traditional Aboriginal themes with contemporary techniques and striking colour. Seascapes, riverscapes, rainforest and wildlife feature in his work.

His work was exhibited in the 2006 Gatherings 11 exhibitions of Cape York and Rainforest artists of Queensland eg at Kick Arts in Cairns. His paintings were featured in the art book Gatherings 11, Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art From Queensland, Australia in 2006 edited by Marion Demozay and published by the Qld Government, Keeaira Press. The paintings featured in the book are Rain Showers, Dreams and Visions and Blue Reef, the first one being a limited edition lino cut and the last two being acrylics on canvas.

He has provided speaker gifts for Symposium 2006 at the Cairns Convention Centre and the Bethany Gate APPA international conference at the Showgrounds in Cairns in May as well as for other occasions over the years

He painted a series of 12 Traditional Shields and the series was purchased by the Queensland Museum. One of these was used on the front cover of the catalogue for the Qld University of Technology exhibition Personal Vision, Multiple Perspectives, Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prints from the Oodgeroo Collection. With some of his work included, this exhibition toured Logan Art Gallery, Brisbane 14 Nov - 14 Dec 1997, Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery 14 Jan - 8 Feb 1998 and Cairns Regional Gallery 28 Feb - 29 March 1998.

Four of these Traditional Shields featured in the Queensland University of Technology Art Museum exhibition Lines of Descent, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Prints and Objects. The exhibition was held 21 Sept - 4 Nov 2001. His work was also exhibited by the Upstairs Gallery in Cairns in the exhibition Art on Parade.

He took part in an exhibition at Banngu Minjaany Art Gallery at Cairns TAFE that was held in conjunction with the launch of the book Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art edited by Anna Eglitis, Ken Thaiday and Arone Meeks and published by CQU Press in 2000. His work "Mangrove Mudflats" featured in the book.

In 2003, his art featured in the book Story Place, Indigenous Art of Cape York and the Rainforest published by the Qld Art Gallery and his work was featured in associated exhibitions eg a July 2003 exhibition at the Qld Art Gallery, Brisbane. The book featured a Rainforest Shield, one of a number of his works that were exhibited. "The depiction of these shields is a political act – a statement of reclaiming the past, reclaiming one's cultural history and reclaiming oneself...My work features the geographical elements particular to my ancestral landscape – the rainforest, cascading waterfalls and volcanic lakes, seascapes, riverscapes and the abundant plant and animal life of the region" P181.

His work was featured in the art book Gatherings 1, Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art From Queensland, Australia in 2001 edited by Marion Demozay and published by the Qld Government, Keeaira Press. An exhibition with art featured in the book was held for the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting held in Qld at the time.

Through a grant from Arts Qld in 2001, he was able to hold a Homecoming Art Exhibition in Atherton in Feb 1-28, 2002 at the Atherton Shire Council Foyer Gallery. He grew up in the Wondecla bush, near Nigger Creek, Herberton, North Qld and for this exhibition, he concentrated on his childhood memories, the influences on him growing up, the pervasive influence of the landscape on his life and art, the interweaving of traditional and contemporary and non-indigenous cultural influences on him, the influence of bush and city on him, and the developmental hues on his life deriving from family and community. Additional to his paintings, he had a display of what life was like at the time and had tea and damper instead of wine & cheese.

In 2004-2005, he did a series of art workshops with young people who were in trouble with the law and also with schoolchildren in Cairns and Innisfail as well as holding exhibitions in his own gallery. In January 2004, he presented a painting to Yad Veshem in Jerusalem to commemorate the Australian Light Horsemen who won the strategic battle at Beersheva in 1917 against the Turks and Germans.

As he has a particular interest in reconciliation and community art, he has used Reconciliation Week in May and NAIDOC a number of times over the years to paint a large canvas of Australia and have the community come into his gallery and put their hands in colored paint and then put it on the painting to declare Hands Up For Reconciliation. This has been self-funded. He has also gone to a number of schools and done the same. An Italian film crew filmed him doing this at his gallery one year.

Munganbana is a graduate of the Associate Diploma of Art (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) course at Cairns TAFE. He has had his designs on the cover of the Aboriginal Law Bulletin, Barfly, Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council research reports, Strikeforce College lecture notes and inside the Aboriginal Health Worker.

He has produced logos for conferences held by the Qld Museum and the Australian Psychological Society and letterheads and posters for organizations such as YACCA. He won the prize for designing the logo for the Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Education Program at Cairns TAFE in 1990 and his art was featured in a recent publication by Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts promoting Aboriginal art as an investment.

Munganbana's art has been exhibited at the Hamburg Museum, Germany in 1991 as part of the Contemporary Australian Visions Exhibition of Aboriginal artists and he has been a sole exhibitor at the Emerald Hill Gallery, Melbourne 1991 and the Lander's prestigious home Cairns 1994. He opened his art gallery in Cairns with a solo exhibition in 1996 and has held them regularly in his gallery since then. He was artist-in-residence at Radisson Treetops in Port Douglas in 2001 and subsequent years.

Munganbana's work was also exhibited at the First World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People at Rotorua, New Zealand 1996, Sacred Assembly Conference, Sagkeeng, Manitoba, Canada 1997 and Reconciliation 97 Conference, Coventry England in 1997. He has been a joint exhibitor at the Pacific International Hotel Cairns 1989, 1990 and 1992, the Gallery of the Australian Landscape Broadway Brisbane 1990, Warana Festival Brisbane 1990, Cairns International Hotel 1990, the Tableland Aboriginal Cultural Association Atherton 1990, Paronella Park Gallery Innisfail 1990, Cairns Trinity Anglican Art Exhibition 1992 and 1993, Qld Aboriginal Creations Gallery Brisbane 1992, Inala Community Art Gallery and Cultural Centre Brisbane 1995, Bundaberg State School 1995 (where he was artist in residence), Fire and Rain Conference Brisbane 1996, and the Marina Gallery, Port Douglas 1998, 1999 and 2000.