



Rammey Ramsey

Born in 1935. Died in 2021, Bow River Station, The Kimberley, Australia.

BIOGRAPHY

Rammey Ramsey was a senior Gija man of Jungurra skin, and was born on the Old Greenvale Station which is now part of the Bow River Station. His “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.

Ramsley was a key figure in the production of the *Bedford Downs Massacre Joonba* (a 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.

Ramsley was true to his law, painting only country that he had 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 painted the places where the Rock Wallaby live and camping areas near waterholes. He applied paint with love and vigour, and his dots are 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 his late red paintings, Ramsley further developed the dynamics of his artistic language. Red paint that once surrounded the black representational forms of hills, rivers and stockyards are, in this late work, 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 - 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 late paintings are not the usual representations of country but 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, Ramsley was featured in *Gija Manambarram Jimerawoon* (Gija Senior Law People Forever) 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 returned to using natural pigments and ochres during this time, having experimented with bright acrylic paints for the latter part of his career.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 *New Work by Rammeley Ramsey*, Seva Frangos Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
 - 2004 *Rammeley Ramsey - Deeper Than Paint On Canvas*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Australia
 - 2003 *Rammeley Ramsey*, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
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GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 *Travelling Through Country*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2020 *Ngarranggarni*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2020 *Badem Mawoondool - Red Ochre, White Ochre*, Aboriginal Contemporary, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- 2019 *Manparra | Big Boss Man - Male Masters Show*, Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia
- 2019 *Our Land Our Place*, NAIDOC Week Exhibition by Artitja Fine Art, Government House, Perth, Western Australia, Australia

- 2019 *Earthworks*, JGM Gallery, London, United Kingdom
2019 *Desert, River, Sea*, Art Gallery Of Western Australia, Western Australia, Australia
2019 *Beyond The Surface Of The Dreaming, Warmun & Jirrawun*, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
2018 *Jooroob Coming Together*, Aboriginal Contemporary
2018 *GIIA Exhibition*, Woolloongabba Art Gallery, Queensland, Australia
2018 *Warmun At Twenty*, Nancy Sever Gallery, Canberra, ACT, Australia
2017 *Jirrawun Collection - Tarnanthi Festival*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
2017 *When The Sky Fell - Legacies Of The 1967 Referendum*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, Australia
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, Northern Territory, Australia
2015 *32nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art Gallery Of The Northern Territory Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
2014 *Warmun: Gija Contemporary Art of Western Australia*, Harvey Art Projects, United States
2013 *Gija Manambarram Jimerawoon (Gija Senior Law People Forever)*, Australian Embassy Paris, France
2010 *Four Men, Four Paintings*, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
2010 *Gaagambi - Poor Things*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Australia
2006 *Jirrawun Artists - Melbourne Art Fair*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Australia
2005 *Jirrawun In The House*, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, Australia
2005 *Beyond the Frontier*, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
2003 *Jirrawun Jazz*, RAFT Artspace, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
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AWARDS & COMMISSIONS

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

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