

Minnie Pwerle

Bio

Born: c 1910
Died: March, 2006
Region: Central Desert
Community: Utopia
Art centre: Utopia Batik and Arts
Outstation: Atnwengerrp
Language: Anmatyerre, Alyawarr
Social Affiliation: Pwerle subsection

'Age did not weary the remarkable desert artist Minnie Pwerle, who took up painting in her late 70s and remained productive until her death this year. She brightened our homes and brought colour to the lives of thousands of Australians. Thought to be about 90 years old, the artist died suddenly from a stroke in March at her home in Atnwengerrp, about 300 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs. Pwerle's incredible energy was an inspiration to all who knew her.' (Taken from "Belle magazine" Celebrate by Stephen Lacey, P. 35)

M. Pwerle (pronounced Pearl) (born c. 1910, at Utopia Station, was an Australian Aboriginal artist. Her country was Atnwengerrp, (pronounced *a-NOONG-a-pa*), and her languages Anmatyerre and Alyawarr, languages from an area of Central Australia 250 km northeast of Alice Springs.

M. is often compared to Emily Kame Kngwarreye. They both became prolific and highly praised artists who came to Western-style art late in life. M. began painting in 1999 when she was in her late eighties and continued to paint up until her death in March 2006.

M. painted of the Awelye Atnwengerrp Dreamings (*Women's Dreaming*). Her distinctive style used linear brushwork based on the body painting used for important women's ceremonies in her native country of Atnwengerrp. She painted with a rich array of colours and her work contained a compelling visual and spiritual power.

All the stories she painted conveyed her deep connection with the land, and knowledge of the foods that it provides. Besides Women's Dreaming, M. painted other Dreamings involving the bush melon, and bush melon seed, types of bush tucker traditionally used by her people, once very common, and becoming increasingly rarer.

M. and the other women used to collect this fruit (that was green in colour and then ripened to a brown colour) and scrape out the small black seeds. They would then eat the fruit straight away or cut it into pieces and skewer them onto a piece of wood and dry them to be eaten in the coming months when bush tucker was scarce.

M.'s ability to capture her love of the land was evident in all her works. She exhibited extensively throughout Australia and the world with great success.

One of M.'s pieces was entered into the 18th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award in 2001. Today, M.'s paintings sell for very high prices. (Taken from Wikipedia, 2007)

Solo Exhibitions

2004 - Minnie Pwerle, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne.
2003 - Minnie Pwerle Original & Authentic Aboriginal Art, Melbourne
2001 - Women Artists of the Australian Desert Auckland, New Zealand
2000 - Minnie Pwerle Sydney

Group Exhibitions

2003
Feb, World Vision_Walkabout Gallery, Sydney "My Grandmother and Me"

March, Light Over Utopia, Japingka Gallery, Fremantle, WA

2002

'Generations', Japingka Gallery, WA

'The Utopia Six', Flinders Lane Gallery, Vic

Chapman Gallery, ACT

'United - Mother and Daughter', Alison Kelly Gallery, Vic

New York City, USA

Mbantua Gallery, Alice Springs, NT

October, Heart and Soul Gallery, Nashville, TN, USA

October, Mary Woods, Portland, OR, USA

October, Urban Wineworks, Portland, OR, USA

October, Carriage House Gallery - 'In the Cove', Portland, OR, USA

2001

Mbantua Gallery, Alice Springs, NT

2000

Mbantua Gallery, Alice Springs, NT

Collections

National Gallery of Victoria

Queensland Art Gallery,

Gallery of NSW

Art Gallery of South Australia

Kelton Foundation, USA

Kreglinger Collection,

Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands