

ANNANDALE GALLERIES

GUNYBI GANAMBARR

Born 15.04.1973
Moiety Dhuwa
Homeland Yangunbi
Clan Ngaymil
Other Names Robert

GUNYBI GANAMBARR has mainly lived and worked as an artist at Gangan, sometimes based at Dhuruputji or Yilpara. A ceremonial yidaki player who is sought after by elders. Accompanied the Yolngu delegations to the opening of the National Museum in Canberra 2001 and the larrakitj installation at the Sydney Opera House 2002, and played at the opening of Djambawa Marawili's exhibition in the 2006 Sydney Biennale.

He spent twelve years working as a builder for the Laynhapuy Homelands Association making houses in over ten homeland centres. He eventually moved back to his mother's homeland at Gangan. Under the tutelage of artists like Gawirrin Gumana and Yumutjin Wunungmurra from his mother's Dhalwangu clan whilst living on their country he has now assumed ceremonial authority.

Gunybi Ganambarr first came to the notice of the Buku-Larrnggay staff as an artist with a carved and painted Ironwood sculpture of a Wurrar or cormorant (a totemic species of his mother clan) in 2002. The wood's natural shape suggested itself to him and he commenced to reveal the bird within. He then added pigment to novel and still entirely consistent with Yolngu madayin (law). His first recognition in a wider sphere was when he was invited by Brenda Croft of the National Gallery of Australia to enter the National Sculpture Prize in 2005. He submitted one of his first sculpted larrakitj. In the year of 2008 he was chosen as an exhibiting finalist in the Xstrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Artist Award at the Gallery of Modern Art at Queensland Art Gallery. He went on to win that Award.

Gunybi has had the instinct to introduce radical new forms without offending community tolerance. He has introduced or developed novel forms such as double sided barks, heavily sculpted poles, incised barks, ironwood sculpture, inserting sculptures into poles.

Gunybi is an energetic participant in ceremonial life who is always cheerful with a robust sense of humour. He is a natural leader amongst his peers. His vigorous zest for life sees him throw himself into whatever activity he is engaged in. He is married to Lamangirra Marawili a daughter of Djambawa Marawili.

After his sold out show at Annandale Galleries in Sydney in late 2009 where he received great acclaim and press coverage he returned home with a renewed vigour. He immediately moved into using found materials on his own initiative and with the blessing of his mentors.

In 2011 Gunybi won the West Australian Indigenous Art Award. At this time *The Australian* wrote; "When Ganambarr was a young man, senior Yolngu artists recognized his ability and ensured he had the skills and knowledge to create the extraordinary bark paintings on show. These wonderfully complex and technically brilliant barks sit alongside new works that exploit the potential of materials found around mining sites. Using the layered webs of lines fundamental to traditional Yolngu painting and the incising of lines that characterizes Yolngu carving, he has reclaimed the insulation panels and rubber belts discarded by miners and transformed them into panels that combine traditional image-making with an enhanced sense of visual depth and tangible space. Ganambarr's work epitomizes the innovative and exploratory nature of contemporary Aboriginal arts practice and not surprisingly the judges awarded him the \$50,000 main prize."