



2ND FLOOR
13 SEP – 23 NOV 2025

TANIA MAJOR

Kowanyama – When Rain Falls, When Earth Sleeps

A Kokobera woman, Major is a public figure who was named Young Australian of the Year in 2007 and has been a forthright advocate and activist for twenty-five years.

Art is not separate from Major's activism. She sees her art as visualising the connection between traditional custodians' knowledge and contemporary environmental conservation, and to inspire dialogue about how ancient practices can guide future stewardship of Country.

Her imagery honours the cultural landscape and vast coastal wetlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria around Kowanyama, which means 'place of many waters' in the Yir Yoront language.

Her paintings emit a colourful energy and Major's high-key palette mirrors the intense colours of sunrise and sunset on the western side of the Cape.

Tania Major indeed presents traditions reimagined in her art, upholding the stewardship that custodians of Country embody.

Tania MAJOR
Kokobera
b. 1981, Cairns, Queensland
Trick: swallowed by Rainbow
200 x 200cm
synthetic polymer on linen
Collection of the artist



Tania Major, Kowanyama, When Rain Falls, When Earth Sleeps
is supported through Cairns RSL Club Artist Fellowship Awards



1ST FLOOR
20 SEP – 30 NOV 2025

FRED WILLIAMS

Collection in Focus

Fred Williams (1927-82) is regarded as one of Australia's most respected and influential twentieth-century artists. He is best known for his distinctive depictions of the Australian landscape, taking these to a new level of modernity and abstraction with elements of landscape reduced to simple image markings on a flat plane of striated colour.

The purchase of *Inlet Weipa* in 2014 by the Cairns Art Gallery Foundation led Lyn Williams to donate a further three works to the Collection in the same year, bringing the total number of Weipa gouaches to eight in the Collection.

VISIT US

CAIRNS ART GALLERY

Cnr Shields & Abbott St
P 07 4046 4800

Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm
Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun 10am – 2pm

- 🌐 cairnsartgallery.com.au
- 📘 Cairns.Art.Gallery
- 📱 @cairnsartgallery

IMAGE COVER
Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally GABORI
Kaiadilt people
b. c.1924–2015, Queensland, Australia
Dibirdibi Country 2009
synthetic polymer paint on linen
198 x 101 cm
Collection: Cairns Art Gallery, Queensland
© The Estate of Sally Gabori/Copyright Agency, 2025

WHAT'S ON

SEP –
NOV 25



Albert Namatjira, *Masterpieces from Country* is supported by
Principal Loan Partner the National Gallery of Australia and
Haymans Electrical and Data Suppliers and through the National
Gallery of Australia's Regional Initiatives Program

GALLERY SPONSORS



CAIRNS ART GALLERY



GROUND FLOOR
13 SEP – 30 NOV 2025

MIRDIDINGKINGATHI JUWARNDA SALLY GABORI

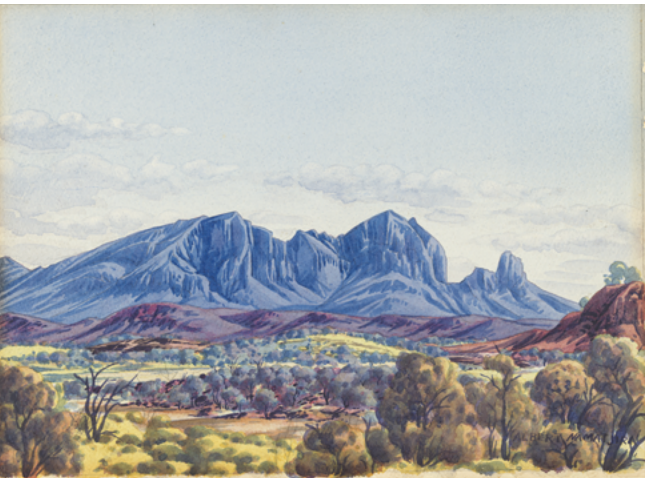
Mundamurra Ngijinda Dulk – My Island Home

The late Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori (c.1924–2015) was a distinguished artist of international renown who left behind an immense cultural legacy. Cairns Art Gallery is proud to present a focused Sally Gabori exhibition for the first time in the region, to mark the Gallery's thirty-year celebrations.

Gabori was born before contact with non-Indigenous people, on Bentinck Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where the Kaiadilt people had continued to live a traditional way of life until the 1940s. In the 1940s, due to a significant weather event, the Presbyterian missionaries arrived and started relocating the small Bentinck population to their mission on Mornington Island.

Gabori was one of the very few people still speaking the Kayardilt language at the beginning of this century. During her late-life artistic career, Gabori translated the beloved features of her Country and the people who belonged to its landmarks, through her new visual language. In the exhibition title, the Kayardilt name, *Mirdidingkingathu*, means 'born at Mirdidingki' (Gabori's Country on Bentinck Island), while *Juwarnda* is the name of her totem, 'dolphin'.

Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally GABORI
b. c. 1924–2015
Kaiadilt people
Dibidibi Country 2011
synthetic polymer paint on linen
151 x 198 cm
Richard & Harriett England Collection
© Gabori/Copyright Agency, 2025



1ST FLOOR
20 SEP – 30 NOV 2025

ALBERT NAMATJIRA

Masterpieces from Country

Albert Elea Namatjira is one of the most significant Western Arrarnta and Australian artists from the mid-20th century who continues to be celebrated for his extraordinary watercolour depictions of his desert Country.

This exhibition showcases Namatjira's masterful representations of the desert landscape's beauty, from his earliest works of the 1940s through to the 1950s. They include his depictions of iconic white ghost gum trees, which he believed embodied the Ancestors, and Finke River sites traversing the MacDonnell Ranges and Glen Helen Gorge. Namatjira would sometimes capture this river whether flowing after the rains or as a dry riverbed alongside his tall white ghost gums. Sites around Mt Sonder, Mt Giles and Standley Chasm were exquisitely captured in pastel blues, purples, and vibrant oranges, rendering Namatjira's deep knowledge of his hereditary Country.

As a pioneer of the Arrarnta School of Watercolour, Albert Namatjira's clear and distinct vision has left a legacy that continues to inform his family and community's creative and cultural work.

Albert NAMATJIRA
Western Arrarnta
1902-1959, Hermannsburg, Northern Territory
Mount Sonder, West MacDonnell Ranges, Central Australia c. 1945
painting in watercolour over faint underdrawing in black pencil
27.1 x 38.2 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra Gift of Marilyn Darling AC in memory of Gordon Darling AC CMG 2016.
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.
© Namatjira Legacy Trust/ Copyright Agency 2025



1ST FLOOR
20 SEP – 30 NOV 2025

SKINSHIP

Collection in Focus

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the body has long been central to cultural expression and transmission. Through dance, song, and sacred mark-making, stories of totemic ancestors and creator beings have been carried across generations for millennia. These embodied traditions are more than art forms; they are acts of deep cultural continuity and spiritual communication.

The exhibition presents works by prominent Far North Queensland-based artists, primarily from the Cairns Art Gallery Collection, whose practices collectively invoke the body as a powerful medium for cultural dialogue and storytelling. From elaborate headdresses and ochre paintings inspired by sacred body markings to contemporary ritual practices involving close kin, *Skinship* highlights the many ways the body serves as a conduit for knowledge, memory, and tradition.

In *Skinship*, the body is not just something we inhabit, but something we listen to—a guide toward healing, connection, and a deeper understanding of our relationship to the world around us.

Naomi HOBSON
Kaatju/Umpila
b. 1978, Coen, Cape York, Queensland
The Grandfather 2020-21
from the *January First* series
digital print on paper
37 x 56 cm
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Naomi Hobson, 2023