

Betty Muffler

Betty Muffler (born 1944) is a highly respected senior Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands artist and renowned Ngangkari (traditional healer), a role she learnt from her aunts and inherited through her father's line. Her practice is grounded in the knowledge systems of Anangu culture, where healing, Country, and story are deeply interconnected. Painting is an extension of her work as a Ngangkari, translating spiritual knowledge and lived experience into powerful visual forms.

Born near Watarru, Muffler grew up at Ernabella Mission following the displacement and deaths of family members in the aftermath of British nuclear testing at Maralinga and Emu Field. This history continues to shape her practice, which centres on healing and the restoration of Country. Her paintings, often titled Ngangkari Ngura (Healing Country), are both maps and manifestations of sacred sites—depicting underground springs, rockholes, and ancestral pathways connected to her work as a healer. Characterised by flowing, interconnected lines and luminous, often monochromatic palettes, her compositions evoke movement across the land while suggesting the unseen energies that run beneath it. These works operate on both a physical and spiritual level, expressing processes of repair, protection, and renewal.

Muffler has been a finalist in major awards including the Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2020, 2021, 2022, 2025) and the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, where she won the Emerging Artist Award in 2017 and the General Painting Award in 2022. Her work has been presented in significant international and national exhibitions including the 14th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; The National: New Australian Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2021); Tarnanthi at the Art Gallery of South Australia (2017, 2020, 2022); Kulata Tjuta at the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes (2020); and Before Time Began at Fondation Opale, Switzerland. Her work is held in major public and private collections in Australia and internationally, including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, Artbank, the Australian War Memorial, and Fondation Opale, Switzerland.

Betty Muffler

LANGUAGE		Pitjantjatjara
BIOGRAPHY	1994	Born near Watarru, SA
SOLO EXHIBITIONS	2026	<i>Kalaya Tjina Tjuta – Emu Tracks</i> , Melbourne Art Fair & Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
	2024	<i>Korean International Art Fair</i> , Jan Murphy Gallery, Seoul
GROUP EXHIBITIONS	2026	<i>Ngura Pulka - Epic Country</i> , National Gallery of Australia, Canberra <i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> (forthcoming), Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
	2025	<i>Iwantja Titujara - Iwantja Forever</i> , Iwantja Arts, SA <i>Wynne Prize</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney <i>These Entanglements: Ecology After Nature</i> , UQ Art Museum, Brisbane <i>Group exhibition</i> , Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
	2024	<i>Summer</i> , Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane <i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> , Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
	2023	NGV Triennial 2023, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne <i>Soft and weak like water – 14th Gwangju Biennale</i> , Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju
	2022 - 2023	<i>Tarnanthi on Tour: Kungka Kunpu</i> , AGSA followed by national tour to: Nugununggula NSW, Maitland Regional Gallery NSW, HOTA Gallery QLD, Geelong Gallery VIC, Bunjil Place Gallery, VIC
	2022	<i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> , Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin <i>Like a Wheel That Turns: The 2022 Macfarlane Commissions</i> , ACCA, Melbourne <i>Mara ala – Open Hands</i> , Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane <i>Wynne Prize</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney <i>All About Art</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne
	2021	<i>Exposure: Native Art and Political Ecology</i> , IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts (MoCNA), Santa Fe USA <i>Observance</i> , Buxton Contemporary, Melbourne <i>The National</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney <i>Wynne Prize</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney <i>Hadley's Art Prize</i> , Hadley's Orient Hotel, Hobart

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (cont)	2021	<i>Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize</i> , Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo VIC <i>Nganana Mukurikula Paintamilani – We Love To Paint!</i> Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne <i>Walka Wiru Nganampa – Our Wonderful Paintings</i> , Outstation Gallery, Darwin
	2020	<i>Open Hands - TARNANTHI</i> , Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide <i>Greenworld</i> , Bayside Gallery, Melbourne <i>Wynne Prize</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney <i>Kulata Tjuta</i> , Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, Brittany, France <i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> , Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin <i>Artists of the APY Art Centre Collective</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne <i>Akuri Tjuta</i> , APY Gallery, Sydney
	2019	<i>Before Time Began</i> , Fondation Opale, lens, Switzerland <i>APY LANDS LA - Central Desert Painters of Australia</i> , Olsen Gruin, Los Angeles USA <i>Milpatjunanyi</i> , APY Gallery, Adelaide <i>Ngangkari</i> , RAFT Artspace, Alice Springs NT <i>Wilurara Ananyi</i> , Short St Gallery, Broome WA <i>Ngangkari Ngara (Healing Country)</i> , Short St Gallery, WA <i>Tjilpi + Pampa – Senior Iwantja Artists</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne <i>Desert Mob</i> , Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT
	2018	<i>John Fries Award</i> , UNSW Galleries, Sydney <i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> , Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin <i>Nganana Kuranyukutu Ma-Palyani – For Our Future Generations</i> , APY Gallery, Sydney <i>Ngura Kunpu (Strong Country)</i> , Short St Gallery, WA <i>Kungka Kunpu (Strong Women)</i> , Koskela, Sydney <i>Desert Mob</i> , Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT <i>Artists of the APY Art Centre Collective</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne <i>Nganampa Ngura Kurunjara - The Place of Our Spirit</i> , Olsen Gallery, Sydney
	2017	<i>TARNANTHI</i> , Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide <i>Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award</i> , Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin <i>Desert Mob</i> , Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT <i>Walma – Moon Rise</i> , Koskela, Sydney <i>Iwantja Arts Exhibition</i> , Short St Gallery, WA <i>Time and Tide</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (cont)	2017	<i>Artists of the APY Lands</i> , Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne	
	2016	<i>APY kakarara nguru : kuwaritja – APY East : new wave</i> , Outstation Gallery, Darwin	
	2015	<i>APY Exhibition</i> , Raft Artspace, Alice Springs NT <i>Ngura Wangkanyi (Talking about Country)</i> , Printmaker Gallery, Melbourne	
	2014	<i>Desert Mob</i> , Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT <i>Ngintaka Country</i> , Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide	
AWARDS & RESIDENCIES	2026	Finalist, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin	
	2025	Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney	
	2024	Finalist, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin	
	2022	Winner, Telstra General Painting Award, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney	
	2021	Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney Finalist, Hadley's Art Prize, Hadley's Orient Hotel, Hobart Finalist, Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo VIC	
	2020	Finalist, Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney Finalist, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin	
	2018	Finalist, John Fries Award, UNSW Galleries, Sydney Finalist, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin	
	2017	Winner, Emerging Artist Award, Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin	
	PUBLICATIONS	2026	Dani Pile (editor) with Peter Mitchell, Imitjala Pantjiti Lewis and Jennifer Mitchell (editorial committee), <i>Traditional Healers of Central Australia NGANGKARI</i> , Nagaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council & Magabala Books
		2022	Nick Miller, <i>This artist built his own mausoleum. And it snores</i> , The Age, 3 July
2020		<i>Kulata Tjuta</i> , Government of South Australia in partnership with APY Art Centre Collective and Art Gallery of South Australia <i>Hope. The strength of the Australian Spirit</i> (cover artwork), Vogue Magazine Australia, September issue	
COLLECTIONS		Artbank National Gallery of Australia, Canberra Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney	

COLLECTIONS (cont)

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Westpac Corporate Art Collection, Sydney

Fondation Opale, Switzerland