

Gloria Petyarre



Also known as:	Gloria Petyarre Tamerre
Date of Birth:	c.1945
Region:	Atnangkere and Utopia, Northern Territory
Language:	Anmatyerre

Gloria was born around 1945 in her country of Atnangkere. She lived in traditional ways before moving to Utopia, one of the established settlements. The Utopia Pastoral Lease was drawn up in 1927 and forced many of the Aboriginal people in this area out of their traditional lands. In 1977 the people of Utopia gained a 99 year leasehold on the Utopia Pastoral Lease which was purchased through the Aboriginal Land Fund Council. A batik program was proposed and became a major success with Gloria being one of the leading artists in this format. It also provided the town of Utopia and its artists with an income and a claim of recognition. Gloria was one of the original artists employed in this program. Her work gained rapid recognition. The Utopia artists then planned a program called 'A Summer Project' whereby they moved from batik to acrylics on canvas. The project was a major success with Gloria and many other artists moving full time into acrylic on canvas.

Gloria paints the traditional women business subjects that are predominant in Utopia. In the Papunya community the artists' contact was Geoffrey Bardon, therefore most of the original artist were male. In Utopia the arts advisor was female, allowing the female artists of this area to flourish. The leading women artists quickly mastered the possibilities. Not only did a huge range of colours emerge, but a far greater tonal range than they were able to achieve with batiks also began to be seen. Gloria stands out here. With her work she uses close tonal values of different colours creating a dynamic optical intensity. Her work features powerful structural linear patterns derived from body painting, outlined with single dots. At other times the structural pattern becomes submerged in a sea of dots, the tonal relationships causing the structural pattern to dissolve into the base design of her painting. She continues to develop her paintings to higher levels of abstraction, continually experimenting with line and colour. Gloria says she prefers the greater freedom and control she finds with the medium of acrylic on canvas. Several of her works now have no dots at all but bands of different colour whose optical effects have evoked comparison to the British artist Bridget Riley.

Her main Dreamings that she paints are the Mountain Devil Lizard, Bean, Emu, Pencil Yam, Grass Seed and Small Brown Grass and well as the traditional body paint designs worn by women. In 1990 she travelled to Ireland, London and India as a representative of the Utopia Women in the 'Utopia - A Picture Story' exhibition. Touring to Tandanya, Adelaide; The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin Ireland; and the Meat Market Gallery in Melbourne.

In 1991 she had her first solo exhibition at Utopia Art in Sydney. Since then she has exhibited at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Jinta Desert Art in Sydney and the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney. She is also featured extensively in major collections around the world.

Bush Medicine

Gloria predominantly paints the leaves of the bush medicine tree. Historically these leaves have been collected by Aboriginal women and then dried. The leaves were then mixed with animal fat and used to cover wounds to aid healing. The mixture was also applied to act as an insect repellent.

In the desert where doctors and medicine were not available, traditional medicine was important to the Aboriginal people, as much as food and water. It is for this reason they developed stories around bush medicine and today depict those stories within their paintings.

For Gloria Petyarre the title of her paintings ('Falling Leaves' or 'Bush Medicine') are used interchangeably, signifying the stories beneath each piece.

As Gloria paints she recalls songs that her mother used to sing whilst preparing the traditional medicine from leaves.

The Wynne Prize

In the terms of the bequest of the late Richard Wynne of Mount Wilson, (who died in 1895) the Wynne Prize is awarded to what the judges consider to be the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolours, or for the best example of figure sculpture by an Australian artist.

It was first awarded in 1897, in honour of the official opening of the Art Gallery of New South Wales at its present site. Many winning paintings have become icons in Australian landscape painting, entering the collections of public art museums, and at least nine Wynne Prize winning entries have been purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The winner of the 1999 Wynne Prize was Gloria Tamerre Petyarre for her painting 'Leaves'.

The Wynne Prize is judged by the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Solo Exhibitions include:

- 2003 Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
2002 Gloria Petyarre – “Leaves & Awelye”, Utopia Art Sydney
2000 Paintings from Anungura, Utopia Art Sydney
1999 Recent Paintings, Flinders Lane Gallery
New Leaves, Utopia Art Sydney
Gloria Tamerre Petyarre: A Survey Exhibition, touring - New England Regional Art Museum
Manly Art Gallery
1998 Utopia Art, Sydney
Robert Steele Gallery, Adelaide
The Anangkere Growth Paintings, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
Gloria Tamerre Petyarre: A Survey Exhibition Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery
Utopia: Ancient Cultures New Forms, Galeri Petronis, Malaysia
1997 New Directions, Flinders Lane Gallery
Instant Pictures, Utopia Art Sydney
1996 Fire Works Gallery, Brisbane
1995 Gloria Petyarre: On the Line, Utopia Art Sydney
1994 Utopia Art Sydney
1993 Awelye, Utopia Art Sydney
1991 Australia Galleries, New York
Utopia Art Sydney, Australia

Group Exhibitions include:

- 2006 Utopia, Flinders Lane Gallery
2004 Utopia, Gloria, Barbara, Minnie, Flinders Lane Gallery
2002 The Utopia Six, Flinders Lane Gallery
Crossroads: the Millennium Portfolio of Australian Aboriginal Prints Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
2001 Museum, Utopia Art Sydney
Dreamtime: the Dark and the Light, Vienna
Desert Flowering: Aboriginal Art from Private Collections, Manawatu Gallery, New Zealand
Seven Sisters Petyarre, Brisbane City Gallery
8th International Works on Paper Fair, Byron Kennedy Hall, Fox Studios Australia, Sydney
Utopia Art Sydney, Paris
2000 Encore, Utopia Art Sydney
The Australian Drawing Biennale, Drill Hall Gallery, The Australian National University, ACT
Melbourne ArtFair, Royal Exhibition Hall, Melbourne
5th National Indigenous Heritage Art Award (Reconciliation Prize), Old Parliament House, Canberra
Lines, Fire-Works Gallery, Brisbane
Landscape, Utopia Art Sydney, Paris
1999 Wynne Prize exhibition. Winning entry.
Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
"Bush Garden", Japingka Gallery, Fremantle
Utopia, BMG Art, Adelaide
Utopia: Ancient Cultures New Forms, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Utopia Art Sydney
Petyarre Dreaming, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
Crossroads: Millennium Portfolio of Australian Aboriginal Artists, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
Amsler - Bastille, Paris.
1998 The Adelaide Festival Theatre
"The Anangkere Growth Paintings" - First Release, Chapman Gallery, Canberra
SCEGGS Redlands Art Award, Sydney
"The Ladies of Utopia", Chapman Gallery, Canberra
"Utopia IV" Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
Utopia, Works on Paper, Flinders Lane Gallery
Paintings from Utopia, Flinders Lane Gallery
ARATEXPO New York in association with Mandurah Ltd, New York
"Women Painters of the Desert", Fire Works Gallery, Brisbane
The Importance of Ochre, Flinders Lane Gallery
National Works on Paper, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria
Primary Colours: Blue, Annandale Galleries, Sydney
1997 Fireworks Gallery, Brisbane
Utopia Art, Flinders Lane Gallery
Selected entrant in the Telstra 14th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award
Participated in the artist in residence program at the Art Gallery of South Australia in the exhibition Dreamings of the Desert
Dacou Gallery, Adelaide
Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
Tapestries (woven by the Victorian Tapestry Workshop) Australian Galleries, Sydney
Flagging the Republic, Grafton Regional Gallery
1996 Recent Paintings From Utopia, Flinders Lane Gallery

Quadrivium Gallery, Sydney
 Framed, Darwin
 Nineteenineyseven, Utopia Art Sydney
 Aurora, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
 Seoul Arts Centre, Korea
 Fifth Australian Contemporary Art Fair, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne
 Paperwork, Utopia Art Sydney
 "New Paint New Work", Utopia Art Sydney
 Contemporary Abstract Aboriginal Art, Sherman Galleries, Sydney
 Imagining the Real: an exhibition of recent acquisitions from the Parliament House Collection, Canberra
 The Third National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Heritage Art Award, Old Parliament House, Canberra
 The Gesture, Utopia Art Sydney
 Utopia Women, Utopia Art Sydney
 Hidden Treasures II: Art in corporate Collections, SH Ervin Gallery
 Flagging the Republic, Sherman Galleries
 New England Regional Art Museum touring exhibition
 Contemporary Australian Abstraction, Niagara Galleries, Melbourne.

1995 Dacou Gallery, Adelaide

1994 A Celebration of the Art and Craft of Aboriginal Women, Aboriginal and Tribal Art Centre, Sydney

1993 Power of the Land, Masterpieces of Aboriginal Art, National Gallery of Victoria

1993 Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery

1992/3 New Tracks Old Land: An Exhibition of Contemporary Prints from Aboriginal Australia, touring USA and Australia

1991 The Eighth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

1990 Aboriginal Women's Exhibition, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

1990 Utopia - A Picture Story, an exhibition of 88 works on silk from the Holmes a Court Collection by Utopia artists which toured Eire and Scotland

1989 Tagari Lia: My Family, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Australia, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow, UK

1989 Utopia Artists, Flinders Lane Gallery

1989 Utopia Women, Coventry Gallery, Sydney

1989 Art From Utopia, Austral Gallery, St Louis, USA

1988 Utopia Batik, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs

1988 Aboriginal Art: The Continuing Tradition, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

1988 Time Before Time, Austral Gallery, St. Louis, USA

1985 Contemporary Aboriginal Art, Utopia Art Sydney

1985 The Second National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

1984 The First National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

Awards:

2009 Wynne Prize Finalist
 2004 Wynne Prize for Landscape Painting, Highly Commended
 1999 Wynne Prize for Landscape Painting, Main Prize Winner
 1993 Design for tapestry for Victorian Tapestry Workshop
 1993 Mural for Kansas City Zoo

Collections:

National Gallery of Australia
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Queensland Art Gallery
 Art Gallery of New South Wales
 Museum of Victoria
 Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory
 Art Gallery of Western Australia
 Queensland University of Technology
 University of the Sunshine Coast Queensland
 Griffith University Collection Brisbane
 University of New South Wales
 Flinders University South Australia
 Art Bank
 Powerhouse Museum Sydney
 Gold Coast City Art Gallery
 Campbelltown City Art Gallery
 Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery
 Riddoch Art Gallery, Mt Gambier, South Australia
 Woollongong City Art Gallery
 Singapore Art Museum

The British Museum
Baker-McKenzie
Macquarie Bank
The Robert Holmes a Court Collection, WA
Wadsworth Atheneum, U.S.A.
Kerry Stokes Collection
James D. Wolfensohn Collection

Other work:

Design for tapestry for Victorian Tapestry Workshop
Tapestry Commission for the Law Courts, Brisbane
Mural for Kansas City Zoo
National Works on Paper Award, MPRG
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Fellowship, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council

Select Bibliography:

Aboriginal Arts Management Association, 1990, Contemporary Aboriginal Art 1990 - from Australia (presented by the Aboriginal Arts Committee, Australia Council and Third Eye Centre, Glasgow)

Brody, A., 1990, Utopia: a Picture Story, 88 Silk Batiks from the Robert Holmes a Court Collection, Heytesbury Holdings Ltd, Perth.

Caruana, W., 1987, Australian Aboriginal Art, a Souvenir Book of Aboriginal, Art in the Australian National Gallery, Australian National Gallery, Parkes, Australian Capital Territory.

Drury, Neville (ed.) Images 3: Contemporary Australian Painting, Craftsman House, 1998

GARSIDE, S.(ed.) Gloria Tamerre Petyarre: a survey exhibition Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery cat. Sydney, 1998

McCulloch, A., & McCulloch, S., 1994, The Encyclopedia of Australian Art, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, St Leonards, New South Wales

Perkins Hetti Beyond the Year of Indigenous Peoples' Art and Australia magazine 1993 Vol 31 No 1 p 98-101

Pritchard, S. cover Indigenous Peoples the United Nations and Human Rights, The Federation Press, 1998;

1991, Aboriginal Women's Exhibition, exhib. cat., Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney;

WALKER, S Modern Australian Tapestries from the Victorian Workshop, Victorian Tapestry workshop, 2000.