



## ABORIGINAL ART GALLERIES

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### **BARBARA WEIR**



Barbara is one of Aboriginal Australia's stolen generations. These were people who were forcibly taken from their parents as children and sent to other parts of the country to be raised in European families. This policy was pursued from the early 1900's to the 1970's, as part of the Australian government policy to integrate mixed race children from fringe settlements into mainstream Australian life. Barbara's mother is Aboriginal artist Minnie Pwerle and her father, Irish-American Jack Weir, a married station owner in the Northern Territory.

Barbara's career as an artist was inspired by the dynamic community of artists at Utopia and the work of her adopted grandmother Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Emily's work had a profound impact on her and in the early 1990's she began seriously to explore her artistic talents. Highly experimental in her approach, she tried many mediums and in 1994 went to Indonesia with other artists to explore the art of batik. This gave her new insights into her own process and she returned full of ideas on how to develop her own style. Initially her painting was largely figurative using traditional symbols such as circles, 'u' shapes, wavy lines and dotting to indicate her traditional Dreamtime story. Since then it has evolved to abstraction, a much more expressive and flexible form.

Bush Berry, Grass Seed, Wild Flower and My Mother's Country are her Dreamings. These are all associated with women's ceremony (they refer to women's body decoration for ceremony and the activity of food gathering of local seeds, grasses, berries, potato, plum, banana, flowers and yams).