



ABORIGINAL ART GALLERIES

EMILY PWERLE



Emily Pwerle's country is Atnwengerrp and her language is Anmatyerre and Alyawarr. She is approximately in her late 80 years, possibly born in 1922 (no records exist). Emily lives in Irrultja, a tiny settlement in Utopia of about 100 people. She has had little exposure to western culture and only picked up a paintbrush for the first time in 2004.

Emily's extended family are all artists, Barbara Weir, Aileen and Betty Mpetyane, and her older sister, the late Minnie Pwerle. Emily was encouraged by all to paint along with her sisters Gayla and Molly Pwerle. It wasn't until late 2004 that Barbara Weir, Minnie Pwerle's daughter, organised the first workshop for the sisters which was held at Irrultja station. This inaugural workshop heralded the start of an amazing painting experience. Just as Minnie showed the glorious freedom of expression, Emily, Molly and Galya followed suit.

Another workshop was quickly arranged and so it continues. Minnie took a close and supportive role in the development of her younger sisters. The sisters had an instant response to applying paint onto canvas, developing expressions of their dreamings that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Emily paints "Awelye Atnwengerrp", meaning women's ceremony in her country. "Awelye-Atnwengerrp" is depicted by a series of lines and symbols, often criss-crossed patterns that are layered across the canvas with colours that are explosive, colourful and energetic. The patterns represent the designs painted on women's bodies during bush tucker ceremonies in Atnwengerrp. Emily has developed her own unique, contemporary style and is proving to be a prolific, energetic and talented artist, akin to her late sister Minnie Pwerle.