



## ABORIGINAL ART GALLERIES

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### GALYA PWERLE



Galya Pwerle was born in the late 1920's although no official records exist. She is the youngest daughter in a family of six girls, including one of Australia's most acclaimed Indigenous artists, the late Minnie Pwerle. For most of Galya's life, she had minimal exposure to western culture, growing up in the incredibly remote community, Utopia Station. Her country is Atnwengerrp and her languages are Anmatyerre and Alyawarr.

Galya first began painting at an elderly age in 2004, after the success of her sister Minnie. In 2004, Barbara Weir organised a workshop in Utopia with Galya and her two sisters Molly and Emily. This inaugural workshop heralded the start of an amazing painting experience. Just as Minnie showed the glorious freedom of expression, Molly, Emily and Galya followed suit.

The sisters began developing expressions of their Dreamings that have been passed down from generation to generation. The passing on of these symbols and patterns ensures the survival of their culture.

Galya paints "Awelye Atnwengerrp" which means women's ceremony, celebrating Bush Tucker which in Galya's case, is Bush Melon or Bush Tomato and its Seed. "Bush Melon Seed" is depicted by small curved brushstrokes while the "Bush Melon" works consists of blunt paintbrush dabs that are layered across a body paint design background. The patterns represent the designs painted on women's bodies during bush tucker ceremonies, in Atnwengerrp. Both styles use various colours to form abstract pieces of great beauty. During these ceremonies the women dance and sing, paying homage to their ancestors, the land and the food it provides. Galya is continually developing her own unique, contemporary style through her artistic practice. In 2005 and 2008, her works were nominated in the prestigious Telstra Awards held in Darwin.

Galya's works have been widely exhibited and feature in a number of private and public collections in both Australia and overseas.