

Boodjar

Through the Works of Meeyakba Shane Pickett

Artwork Labels

Ballardung Noongar man, Meeyakba Shane Pickett (1957–2010), always knew he wanted to be an artist. Growing up in Quairading, a small town in the wheatbelt region east of Perth, Pickett’s father encouraged him to work on the family farm, but he insisted on pursuing a career as an artist. With family support, Pickett moved to Perth as a teenager, and despite no formal training, his first exhibition at the age of 19 was an enormous success. Encouraged to formalise his skills, Pickett graduated from the Claremont School of Art in 1983. Subsequent successful exhibitions followed as well as opportunities in theatre set design, poster and graphic design, and public art.

Boodjar: Through the works of Meeyakba Shane Pickett showcases a collection of the artist’s works on paper, from the earliest part of his practice in the 80s through to his final years (2007), bringing together a range of works often not exhibited together, allowing the viewer a deeper understanding of his practice and ability to switch between mediums and materials.

Featuring a poetic response alongside the works, from Wajarri/Badimaya/Wilunyu (Yamaji Nation) poet and long-time friend of the artist, Dr Charmaine Papertalk Green, Pickett’s continuous connection to Boodjar (Country) and his artistic vision is revealed here; in the words of Shane’s wife, Violet “...to create artworks that honour Nyoongar traditions and culture.”

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Meeyakba Shane Pickett

Balardung people

born 1957 Quairading, Western Australia

worked in Perth, Western Australia

died 2010, Western Australia

Clouds Over a Dry Outback Landscape

2007

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E402

Outback and the Hillscape Afternoon

2007

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E401

Thru the Hands of Meeyakba

*Thru Meeyakba hands many narratives unfold
universe and country songlines marked on
Canvas, paper for story mapping of old paths
Thru white dotted lines and white tree trunks*

*Warm country is cooled by forming shadows of life
Creation tracks stamped firmly into place to follow
The dance of the brown snake leads everything onto
Country coloured red opening all eyes to creation*

*And the rain is needed in the season of fertility
Plentiful frogs dance and sing from water pools
The sleeping geckos may not be visible to seekers
Who know and understand their need to rejuvenate*

*The moon high above in the midday light seems bigger
Than earth, and so close one might reach up to touch
the moon with dust swirls catching moon mark songlines
The moon is shy during midday light and will try to hide*

*The harsh Pilbara landscape washed coloured red
Sand makes country and eyes seeing a beautiful space
Mixed Pilbara red dirt and purple haze of distance hills
Spinifex grass and tree trunks merge like wildflowers*

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*Outback warm red dirt looks marbled through the
Soften yellow grasses and spinifex giving a false
Impression to outsiders of being a comfortable space
White tree trunks placed like white dotted line marks*

*The hills retreated into the horizon talking to the sky
In the hazy colour of blue connecting together for
That yarn on a cloudy day which changes as one
Moves closer to hills capturing sun hitting rockface*

*Country appears moon like in the purple haze
Of the songlines at dawn or is it the twilight time
When life appears surreal, but song lines journey
to country and family old story lines passed on thru
The hands, energy, and art of the late Shane Pickett*

Thru the hands of Meeyakba many narratives unfold

DR CHARMAINE PAPERTALK GREEN, 27 JANUARY 2023

Pilbara Landscape Series IV

1996

watercolour on paper

Purchased 1996

1996/0047

Untitled

1984

watercolour on paper

Purchased 1996

1996/0046

The Sleeping Geckos During Muguroo

2005

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E399

Meeyakba Shane Pickett explored his passion and love for *Boodjar* (Country) through painting. In his earlier works, he drew inspiration from the Carrolup Native Settlement, colourful landscapes produced by Noongar child artists, and from the works of the late Albert Namatjira.

In the last decade of his career, he explored a more abstract approach. His figurative landscapes articulate a balance of expressive and painterly characteristics with segments of clear details, while his later works are stripped back into abstraction, where a sense of place is narrated through the elemental aspects of the land. However, even as his work became more abstract, the sophistication of landscape remained.

Shane Pickett remains an artistic inspiration and acknowledged leader in the Noongar community for the way in which his practice evolved, and with it, the appreciation from wider Australia for the work of Aboriginal artists from the south-west of Western Australia.

Meeka and the Midday Light

2005

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E398

Muguroo Frogs Songs

2005

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E400

From the Dreamtime, Land is Coloured Red and the Shadows Cool

2007

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E403

The Dance of the Brown Snake

2004

synthetic polymer paint on paper

The Pickett Estate and The Mossenson Art Collection

2022/E397