



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

KNOW HER

A SECONDARY EYE

Catalogue to accompany the solo presentation of Queenie McKenzie at Sydney Contemporary

A Secondary Eye

5 - 8 September 2024

A Secondary Eye acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are respectfully advised that this publication contains images and references to people who have passed away.

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we present this exhibition showcasing the extraordinary work of Queenie McKenzie.

Over recent years, many observers have expressed frustration at the lack of recognition afforded to Queenie. Those familiar with her pivotal role in the formation of the East Kimberley School of Art alongside luminaries such as Rover Thomas, Paddy Jaminjin, George Mung Mung, Hector Jandany and Jack Britten understand her paramount significance. Notably, as the sole female artist in this founding group, Queenie played a defining role in shaping the aesthetic for which the Kimberley region is now renowned.

The purpose of this exhibition was to curate a comprehensive presentation and catalogue to be featured at the highly attended Sydney Contemporary art fair. Our goal is to reaffirm Queenie's enduring importance, a fact widely acknowledged by academics, artists, collectors, and institutions so it is important to have that recognised in the wider market. In our preparations, we have engaged with her Estate and enlisted the expertise of Dr. Suzanne Spinner to provide clarity on acceptable ethical provenance, an important step in ensuring that Queenie's cultural legacy is duly acknowledged and esteemed.

We would also take this opportunity to acknowledge that this marks Boris Cornelissen's final exhibition with A Secondary Eye before embarking on a new role at Sotheby's in Hong Kong next month. Boris's invaluable contribution to the success we have achieved in these formative years has been immeasurable and we wish him the very best in what is an incredible opportunity for him at Sotheby's.

Jesse-Jack De Deyne

Queenie McKenzie in front of *Banana Springs*, 1996 at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

name Nagarra/Nakarra. Amongst so many surnames, it is by the name of her old husband, Charlie McKenzie a Gija stockman who also had a Gadiya father, that she is best known. Queenie and Charlie McKenzie had no children of their own, but they grew up many.

My name bin grow up from these hills (Kjellgren, E. p.12).

Queenie Mingmarriya worked on Texas for forty years and like all the Gija women she was a great horsewoman and worked the cattle too. She was part of the Texas Mob, the families that included Hector Jandany, George Mung Mung and Rover Thomas, who lived under the protection of their Gadiya Manager, an Irishman named Jimmy Klein who was married to Hector's elder sister, Julia.

In the 1960s, Leprosy, The Big Sick swept through the Kimberley and Catholicism came to Texas Downs, and ultimately to Warmun via the Derby Leprosarium or lazaretto, Bungarun, established by the sisters of St John of God. Patients were brought in from all over the Kimberley and Queenie Mingmarriya's mother, Dinah and her friend Winnie Budbaria, another sister of Hector Jandany, spent long periods at Bungarun. Winnie became the Catechist, and it was known when she was instructing, there was no playing cards. Dinah was her devout acolyte and at Warmun, Queenie Mingmarriya was an enthusiastic hymn singer - "Hail Queen of Heaven" was a favourite. Dinah and her daughter were fierce Law Women, strong horsewomen and devout Catholics and Queenie Mingmarriya grew up, immersed in the Gija ritual world; speaking Gija while also swathed in Josephite Catholicism, without ever registering a conflict between them.

Queenie Mingmarriya worked as cook and nurse in the stock camps mustering bullocks, moving across Country staying a week or so in each place. The procession began at Pandanus Yard near the homestead, then on to Kilfoyle Yard, Norton, Spring Creek Yard and Cattle Creek, before returning to the homestead and





Queenie Mingmarriya's style combined profile views of hierarchical scale proximally placed, with planar depictions of rivers and roads, and minimal stylised figuration. She developed her own distinctive iconography to denote both Country, Ngarranggarniy sites, significant places and people. Queenie Mingmarriya painted the "power places" in her Country, Texas Downs - Wirdim/ Wertim/Red Butte, Rawooliliny/ Mount Glass, Kamangalama/Dog Boss Rock, Doolngayim/Argument Gap, Jewigunning/Bower Bird place, Winnaba/ Winnama/ Winnabun Springs, Nintermangy/Neemeroni/Leaning in All Directions - the fertility site of the Rainmaker tree in the grove of fallen boabs, Dahlo Dahlo/Dahlu Dahlu Hill, Yoornoor Country near Mistake Creek, Moorndoo/ Mooloogoor Hills, Nimirridi/ Fig Tree Dreaming, Joodal Country/Tick Dreaming, Dayiwool/Tayiwul /Barramudi Gap, Limestone Hills, Yarlga/Yarlka / White stone place, an echidna Dreaming place and the adjoining Country, Purnululu/ the Bungle Bungles.

'Every rock, every hill, every water, I know dat place backwards and forwards and up and down; inside out. It's my Country and I got names for every place' (Vinnicombe, P. p 20).

Rather than making maps of Country, she depicted sites as distinctive emblems and arranged them in serried ranks on a flat field like a painted banner celebrating her knowledge and signifying her attachment to them. Kjellgren comments that she "compresses" space and time in the landscape "to fit the painted surface" (Kjellgren, E.p.19). The triptych became a characteristic feature of her work. Her triptychs have the quality of an altar piece, emblazoned with codified pictograms showing as much Country and as many "power places" on each screen as can be fitted. In other works, she tells stories focusing on incidents from the past, stories she has been told, populated with stylised figures, about Massacres, the Packman, a Gadiya man speared at Red Butte, Major the bushranger, or stories from her own history and observations - about Rover Thomas, The Great Flood of 1922 on Texas Downs, Drinking story and the foundation of the school.



Queenie with Rover Thomas in 1995

Courtesy of Kevin Kelly

QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Untitled, circa 1994

natural earth pigments on canvas

60 x 90 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Warringari Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia

Private Collection, Melbourne

Utopia Art Sydney, Sydney

Private Collection, Sydney



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Untitled, circa 1996

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears dimensions and Waringarri Aboriginal Arts cat.no. verso

90 x 100 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia

Private Collection, Brisbane



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Untitled, circa 1998

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears signature, dimensions and Red Rock cat.no. verso

60 x 80 cm

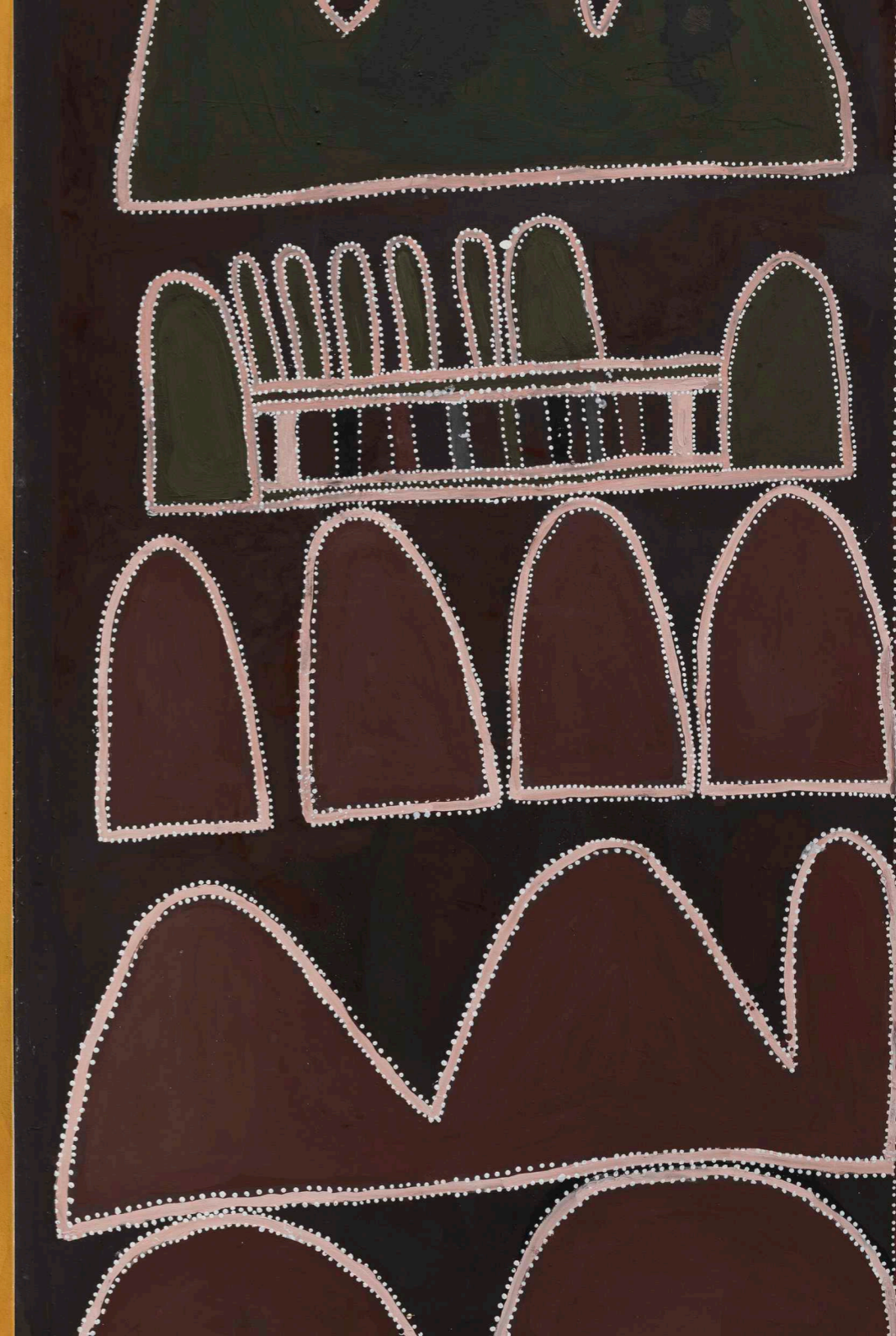
Provenance

Painted at Warmun Community, Western Australian

Red Rock Art, Western Australia (cat.no. KP 046)

Private Collection, Queensland





QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Texas Downs (Tryptch), 1998

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears artist's name, date, dimensions and Red Rock Arts cat.nos. verso

180.5 x 100.5 cm (each)

180.5 x 301.5 cm (overall)

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Red Rock Art, Western Australia (cat.nos. Q19 & KP419)

Private Collection, Queensland



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Untitled, 1998

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears date and Red Rock Arts cat.no. verso

30 x 90 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Red Rock Art, Western Australia (cat.no. Q13 & KP393)

Private Collection, Brisbane





QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Diamond Mine (Argyle), 1997

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears signature, title, date, dimensions and Warmun Traditional Arts cat.no. verso

100 x 100 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Warmun Traditional Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. QM1153)

Private Collection, Victoria

Lawsons-Menzies, Sydney, 14 November 2007, lot 55

Private Collection, Sydney

Important Australia & International Art, Menzies, Melbourne, 26 June 2024, lot 81

Private Collection, Sydney



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Banana Springs, 1996

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears signature, title, date, dimensions and Warmun Traditional Arts cat.no. verso

91 x 122 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Warmun Traditional Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. QM0022)

The Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands

The Thomas Vroom Collection, Leonard Joels, Melbourne, 26 February 2017, lot 213

Private Collection, Sydney





QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Untitled, circa 1995

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears artist's name, dimensions and Waringarri Aboriginal Arts cat.no verso

140 x 100 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun Community, Western Australia

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. AP1595)

Private Collection, Queensland



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Kamanggarrnarding Country - Halls Creek Yard, 1995

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears artist's name, dimensions and Waringarri Aboriginal Arts certificate verso

40 x 60 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. AP0649)

Private Collection

This painting shows Kamanggarrnarding country (Halls Creek Yard) on Texas Downs Station near Turkey Creek, Western Australia where the artist spent most of her early life. Like much of her work, this painting shows the place where she grew up. The large hill called Kamanggarrnarding is in the centre of the painting. Nearby is a spring from which a creek flows out across the country.





QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Darlu Darlu, 1995

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears artist's name, title, dimensions and Waringarri Aboriginal Arts cat.no. verso

141 x 101 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. AP1586)

Private Collection



QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Propa Home - Texas Downs, 1995

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears Warmun Traditional Arts cat.no. verso

90 x 122cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Warmun Traditional Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. QM11)

Private Collection, Victoria





QUEENIE MCKENZIE

Yirago - Rosewood Station, 1995

natural earth pigments on canvas

bears artist's name, title, dimensions and Waringarri Aboriginal Arts cat.no. verso

101 x 140 cm

Provenance

Painted at Warmun community, Western Australia

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Western Australia (cat.no. AP1173)

Private Collection, Queensland



IMPORTANCE OF PROVENANCE

A Secondary Eye practices with the most stringent of provenance guidelines to ensure the cultural integrity of the First Nations artworks that we sell, providing a verifiable chain of custody that authenticates the origins and history of the artwork. This is crucial for preserving the cultural significance and authenticity of Indigenous art. It ensures that artists receive proper credit, acknowledgment and fair compensation for their works. In most instances this entails us to seek out community based art centre provenance sources, which have historically operated with a high level of ethical standard.

The issue that arises with regards to Queenie McKenzie's career is that during her lifetime there was no community owned and operated art centre within the community of Warmun where she resided (that is until the establishment of Warmun Art Centre three months before her passing). She painted for a number of sources, most notably for Waringarri Aboriginal Arts and Red Rock Gallery in partnership with Kevin Kelly who now handles the Queenie McKenzie Estate. In preparation for this exhibition we engaged the Estate and Dr Suzanne Spinner in the aim of bringing clarification on acceptable channels of provenance. It was important to address these issues to ensure that her cultural importance is properly acknowledged and valued in manner which we hope will become the new standard.

Queenie McKenzie: A BRIEF TIMELINE

1982 QM restages the Mutu Dance to demonstrate the power of Women's Law in the East Kimberley after the desecration of the Barramundi Dreaming site during exploration for diamonds on Argyle. She is assisted by Dr Patricia Vinnicombe, an archaeologist from the WA Museum.

QM paints her first work- a diagram of female Skin Groups for Vinnicombe.

1985 Waringarri Aboriginal Arts and Crafts (WAAC) established in Kununurra to serve artists including those at Turkey Creek/Warmun 200 kms away

1986 Encouraged by Patricia Vinnicombe, QM paints two works as teaching aids for the Warmun Ngalangangpum Two Way School, *'The Eagle and the Crow'* and *'Red Butte'* (an important place on Texas Downs).

1987 QM collaborates with linguist, Frances Kofod on a guide to Cooking and Eating Goanna correct way- Jang Yarra Jarrampayiny, for the school.

Joel Smoker of Waringarri Arts asks Sr Theresa Morellini at Warmun school if there are any women interested in painting, she suggests QM, who is inspired by the example of her friend Rover Thomas. Smoker arranges for QM's work to go to Mary Macha for market appraisal. Macha sells one work immediately to the Berndt Museum at UWA, where QM is described as "Queenie Brennan". Over the next few years Macha takes a small number and in 1991 sells them to the NGV, QAGOMA, however ultimately Macha declines to represent Queenie McKenzie. *'Landscape at Turkey Creek'*, UWA; *'Old People Looking for Goanna and Emu'*, NGV; *'Moses and the Ten Commandments'*, NGV; *'Blackfellas in bush country'*, NGV.

1988 *'Old Couple Hunting for Bush tucker'*, NGV; *'Kimberley Landscape'* QAGOMA.

Peggy Griffiths, Mignonette Jamin and Nellie Gordon begin to paint for Waringarri Arts.

Mirrilingki Spirituality Centre opened in Warmun by Sr Theresa Morellini offering drug and alcohol counselling.

1989 Nancy Noonju and Madigan Thomas also start painting.

1990 QM paints her first works for Waringarri Arts (WAAC) in May.

6 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

WAAC exhibition *Turkey Creek Artists Dreamtime Gallery*, Perth in July

1991 5 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

Deaths of QM's mother Dinah Nyukaya/Nokiah followed by her elderly husband, Charlie McKenzie.

Aboriginal Women's Exhibition AGNSW, curated by Hetti Perkins features two works by QM

1992 8 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

Around this time QM moves into the Pensioners Quarters, Walumba Aged Care Facility.

1993 14 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

Images of Power, NGV curated by Judith Ryan & Kim Akerman includes works by QM: 'God Sending the Holy Spirit' and 'Limestone Hills near Texas Downs' 1991.

WAAC exhibition *Turkey Creek Tandanya*, Adelaide

1994 26 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

Mabel Juli and Shirley Purdie, (daughter of Madigan Thomas) begin painting.

Bush Women: Fresh Art from Remote Western Australia, exhibition at Fremantle Arts Centre, features work by QM

In September, Warmun Aboriginal Corporation/Warmun Community Arts, Warmun Community (Turkey Creek) Incorporated, backed by Kimberley Art, Melbourne is established and embedded in the Warmun community. Directed by Peter Harrison of Kimberley Art and run by ex-policeman Dave Rock, with assistance from the Warmun Community Council members, Dallas Purdie and Jock Mosquito.

Vinnicombe copied records of 52 paintings sold through Warmun community during the nine-month period September 1994-May 1995.

Ochre Gallery established in Kununurra by Jennifer Joi Field ostensibly to serve the female artists.

Vinnicombe was told by Field that she had purchased about 32 paintings from QM that year.

Vinnicombe noted-
"Almost every week either one or both of the agencies working out of Kununurra, Waringarri Arts and the Ochre Gallery, left canvases for Queenie to paint" (p.3).

Neil McLeod began visiting Warmun and commissioning works directly from QM when she was living at Walumba Aged Care Facility, aka The Pensioners Unit.

According to Vinnicombe, "innumerable canvases" were sold from there.

1995 46 paintings in ochre for (WAAC)

Vinnicombe copied records of 68 paintings made for Waringarri Arts by QM over eighteen months from 1994-5

Vinnicombe notes- "The standard of documentation that accompanies the paintings varies from excellent to abysmal, with that from Waringarri Arts being the most comprehensive" (p.3).

In November, Narangunny Art Traders (NAT) owned by Maxine Taylor and Serge Brooks form Warmun Traditional Artists, backed primarily by Kimberley Art, Cooeee Gallery-Adrian Newstead, Utopia Art Sydney-Christopher Hodges and also supported by Indigenart /Mossenson, Perth and initially by Helen Read, Digeri Art Tours/Palya Art.

1996 30 paintings in ochre (WAAC)

Peggy Patrick begins to paint.

WAAC exhibition/first major solo: *Gara-garag My life Longa Texas*, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

1997 24 paintings in ochre (WAAC)

In October, Red Rock Art established in Kununurra by Kevin Kelly, former manager at Waringarri Arts.

In December, Maxine Taylor and Serge Brooks, Warmun Traditional Artists /Narangyunny Art Traders (NAT) asked to vacate the old Post office building and leave the Warmun community, the site of their "Art Centre" in order to: "set up a Community owned and Community managed Art Centre Enterprise, where the people who worked there would manage the centre and report to and be accountable (operationally and financially) to the Warmun Council":

1998 19 paintings in ochre and 25 works on paper/prints (WAAC)

Making approximately 80 works for Waringarri Arts

In September Warmun Art Centre (WAC) opens.

QM distances herself from NAT entirely and fulsomely supports WAC

Solo exhibition, *Queenie McKenzie Recent Work (1994-98)*, Kimberley Art, Melbourne

In November Queenie McKenzie dies at Warmun.

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin

Australian National University, Canberra

National Museum Australia, Canberra

Museums Victoria, Melbourne

Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Kaplan & Levi Collection, Seattle

Stokes Family Collection, Perth

Wesfarmers Collection, Perth

Holmes à Court Collection, Perth

Thomas Vroom Collection, The Netherlands

Kluge Ruhe Collection, Virginia

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1990 DREAMTIME GALLERY, PERTH

1991 HOGARTH GALLERIES, SYDNEY

1991 ABORIGINAL WOMEN PAINTERS, ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

1991 VM GALLERIES, MIAMI, U.S.A.

1992 GALLERY GABRIELLE PIZZI, MELBOURNE

1993 TANDANYA, ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

1993 KIMBERLEY ART, MELBOURNE

1993 INDIGENART, PERTH

1993 CHAPMAN GALLERY, CANBERRA

1994 KIMBERLEY ART, MELBOURNE

1994 GALLERY JILA, BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

1994 HOGARTH GALLERIES, SYDNEY

1994 FREMANTLE ARTS, PERTH

1994 TANDANYA, ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

- 1994 AUSTRALIAN HERTIAGE COMMISSION, CANBERRA
- 1994 GALLERY GONDWANA, ALICE SPRINGS, NORTHERN TERRITORY
- 1995 HOGARTH GALLERIES, SYDNEY
- 1995 DURACK GALLERY, BROOME, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
- 1995 COOEE ABORIGINAL ART, SYDNEY
- 1995 SAVODE GALLERY, BRISBANE
- 1995 WILLIAM MORA GALLERY, MELBOURNE
- 1996 PRINTABOUT, DARWIN
- 1996 WILLIAM MORA GALLERY (SOLO)
- 1996 SAVODE GALLERY BRISBANE
- 1997 HOGARTH GALLERY SYDNEY
- 1998 KIMBERLEY ART, MELBOURNE (SOLO)
- 2007 WILLIAM MORA GALLERIES, MELBOURNE
- 2020 TALKING BLAK TO HISTORY, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA
- 2020 FROM LITTLE THINGS BIGS THINGS GROW, KLUGE-RUHE COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, USA



Catalogue to accompany the exhibition *Queenie McKenzie: Know Her*

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