

Iluwanti Ken & Betty Muffler

Mara Ala - Open Hands

12 - 30 July 2022

Jan Murphy Gallery is excited to present *Mara Ala – Open Hands* by Iluwanti Ken and Betty Muffler.

'Mara Ala – Open Hands' brings together acclaimed senior Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara artists and Ngangkari (traditional healers) Iluwanti Ken and Betty Muffler. Showcasing the distinct styles and visions of both Ken and Muffler, the exhibition also features for the first time, expansive collaborative paintings by the award-winning indigenous artists.

"Ngayuku mamaku ukari. Iluwanti-ku ngunyntju, ngayuku mamaku malanypa ka ngayuku kuntili pulka. Ka Iluwanti-nya, ngayuku malanypa. Ngayuku malanyntju mamaku walkatjunkupai walawuru. Ngayuku mamaku, Iluwantilu drawamilaningi katunguru tjarukutu munu tjarunguru katu. Walawuruku tjukurpa, tjukurpa wiru mulapa. Ngayulu yanga kanyini tjukurpa unngu. Ngayuku walytja tjutangku nintinu-na nguraku ngayunya nintinilta ngayuku mama tjungu, ngayuku ngunyntju kuntili kulu-kulu, Ilwantiku ngunyntju, uwankara.

Iluwanti is my father's niece. Iluwanti's mother was my father's younger sister, my eldest aunty. But in our way, Iluwanti is my younger sister. My younger sister paints my father's eagle tjukurpa. These are the eagles, the tjukurpa at my father's place, that Iluwanti draws. She has been drawing these eagles swooping down from above and flying up from below with good food to give to their young. It's a wonderful story. I have this tjukurpa, the eagle spirit of my father, within me now. My extended family taught me all about our home country as we moved around it together. My father, my mother, and my aunts, including Iluwanti's mother - all of them taught me so much in my early years." - Betty Muffler, 2022 (Translation by Patrick Hookey)

"I paint the stories of my father's country – Walawuru Tjukurpa – the story of the eagles. This is my tjukurpa and all of my children's tjukurpa too." - Iluwanti Ken, 2022

Iluwanti is well known for her large scale ink drawings which feature graphic depictions of mother eagles hunting. These highly detailed drawings are created using punu sticks and express her tjukurpa (Anangu cultural heritage, encompassing past, present and future). She says that birds like the walawuru (eagles) and patupiri (swallows) have lessons for Anangu women about how to care for one's children. These birds build strong wiltjas (shelters) for their family, they hunt for food and protect their young from dangers.



Betty Muffler and Iluwanti Ken, Indulkana 2022. Image courtesy of Tjala Arts and Iwantja Arts

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Betty Muffler (born 1944) is a highly respected senior woman and renowned Ngangkari (traditional healer), having learnt this practise from her aunties, handed down through her father's side. Alongside a rigorous art practice, Betty works extensively with NPY Women's Council and medical practitioners to support Anangu to good health and through times of crisis. Muffler's artistic practice spans painting, drawing, printmaking and tjanpi (native grass) weaving. In 2020 Muffler was commissioned by VOGUE Magazine to create an artwork for the cover of their September issue who gifted the work to the National Gallery of Australia. In 2021 Muffler was a finalist in the Wynne Prize, Hadley's Art Prize and the Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize. Artworks by Betty Muffler are held in many important public and private collections including National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia and Artbank.

Iluwanti Ken (born 1944) is a Pitjantjatjara artist, originally from Watarru and now living in Amata, in the APY lands in South Australia. In 2020, Iluwanti Ken won the 37th Telstra NATSIAA Works on Paper Award and was a finalist in the 2021 Dobell Drawing Prize at NAS Sydney and the 2020 National Works on Paper Prize at Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. In addition to her art practice, Iluwanti sits on the board of directors for both Tjala Arts and the APY Art Centre Collective. Her work is held in numerous public collections including the Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, QAGOMA, Artbank and the Singapore Art Museum.

Betty Muffler appears courtesy of Iwantja Arts, SA.
Iluwanti Ken ceramics are sponsored by Australia Council of the Arts.