



Coming
JENNY MURRAY-JONES
Home

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Koorie Heritage Trust acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional custodians of Narrm, the Wurundjeri Peoples of the Greater Kulin Nation, on whose lands we operate.

We also pay respect to the Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa and Wiradjuri Peoples, and acknowledge Jenny as a proud Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa and Wiradjuri woman. We also pay respect to all First Peoples and celebrate their continuing culture.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that this publication may contain images, names and stories of deceased persons.

Foreward

TOM MOSBY
CEO, KHT

Foreward

WOMINJEKA (WELCOME)

The Koorie Heritage Trust is honoured to present *Jenny Murray-Jones: Coming Home*, a solo exhibition consisting of a significant suite of paintings, including works on linen by long term arts practitioner, Dr. Jenny Murray-Jones, a Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri artist.

This exhibition presents more over 20 works created by Jenny, ranging from the 1990s to more recent works, noting that the exhibition features art from the KHT collection, loaned material and from Jenny's own extensive collection.

Coming Home documents a powerful story of connection, including linkages to her meticulous thesis research in 2017 that explored new ways of seeing family history and cultural connectiveness through journeying back to Country and mob. It is a fascinating story from a Southeast Australia perspective and an integral visually empowering narrative to convey in an exhibition setting.

Jenny has an uncanny ability with oils on linen; a very lyrical and stunning reflection of life and beauty in connection to family and culture, often through depicting a snapshot of family at a precise moment that captures the sharp detail of eucalyptus gums, ripples in river water and people connecting to various stimuli around them.

The role of the Koorie Heritage Trust exemplifies how art and culture is at the heart of all we do. It enables culture and history to reflect the value in art, ceremony and events, to keep our spirit and culture in sync together. In a time of Treaty and truth-telling, we work towards ensuring that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people join in goodwill and cooperation, to bridge the cultural gap and to raise awareness and appreciation of Victorian First Peoples, our culture and communities.

In presenting *Jenny Murray-Jones: Coming Home* we gratefully acknowledge the support of our exhibition partners: Creative Victoria, City of Melbourne, the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support, ANZ Bank and Viva Energy Australia.

Thank you to Jenny Murray-Jones and family, whilst acknowledging the Curatorial and Collections KHT team in bringing these visually stunning works together for the first time.

Ngoon Godjin (Thank You)

TOM MOSBY

CEO Koorie Heritage Trust

JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Suburban backyard (detail)
2000
oil on canvas
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
Purchased 2001
AH 02707





JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa,
Wiradjuri)
Possum skin cloak
2003
Oil and wax on canvas
Collection of
Koorie Heritage Trust
Gift of Beth Charles and
Bernard Marin 2004
AH 03434

Coming Home

**GAIL HARRADINE
(WOTJOBALUK)
CURATORIAL MANAGER, KHT**

Coming Home

JENNY MURRAY-JONES

Yorta Yorta/Baraparapa/Wiradjuri
b. 1956 Melbourne



Photo by Georgie Cameron. Courtesy of NIKERI Institute, Deakin University, 2024

Dr Jenny Murray-Jones has a long-standing connection with the Koorie Heritage Trust (KHT). In May 2000, Jenny took part in an early career solo exhibition at KHT's Aunty Joyce Johnson Memorial Gallery in Flinders Lane, Melbourne (KHT, 2000). I was intrigued to view the photocopied in-house booklet of the exhibition, which is proudly stored as part of the KHT Reference Library. I note that photocopied catalogues were kept as records of past exhibitions, and this appears in catalogue number three in the year 2000. The front cover featured *Custody*, a very powerful and compelling portrait that brought attention to the oppression and incarceration of First Peoples. Unresolved serious injustices resulting from ongoing prejudices and government control since colonial invasion

continue to manifest, forming massive ripple effects for First Peoples. *Custody* is an expressive ink drawing depicting the vulnerability and trauma of a First Peoples male. This powerful work is one of a suite of artwork acquisitions obtained from Jenny's 2000 exhibition that are now a proud part of the Koorie Heritage Trust Collection. Six works in total were acquired by the KHT before the exhibition opened! This attests to the importance of culture, storytelling and documenting family strength, each of which is integral to Jenny's work, and the transference of oral history to a visual medium.

Several paintings featured in Jenny's exhibition were acquired for the KHT collection because of their undoubtable fit with the Koorie Heritage Trust collection policy: incredibly strong works of art with an amazing visual reference that ruminate on First Peoples lives. Jenny's colourful and flowing use of oil is a feast to behold and savour. She applies wonderful, swirling layers of luminous oil paint on quality linen. I am sure combining the mapping of Country, which depicts love for people in her family, with the splendour of colour of gum trees and waterways has inspired more than one artist to take up oil paint. Her works are exceptional for their depth and tonal range, which create an investigation of ripples in the waters of the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers. Their in-depth depictions include the meandering limbs of gum trees, and floating leaf and organic matter along the riverbanks, which together hold deep knowledge and memory. People and place are a consistent theme throughout her works as she investigates points in time and linkages to Country, and expresses feelings of longing, contentment and cultural spirituality.

An insightful conversation from Nets Victoria comes to mind at this point. In an article titled *Growing up Yorta Yorta Spaces for Community and the Story of Kaiela Arts – Belinda Briggs in Conversation with Bryan Andy*, Bryan Andy (Yorta Yorta), a writer, radio broadcaster and theatre maker, and Belinda Briggs (Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Wurundjeri, Ngiyampaa),

**ART IS A COMMUNICATION
OF KNOWLEDGE, THOUGHTS
AND IDEAS, IT PROVOKES
EMOTIONAL RESPONSE
TO ITS NARRATIVE AND AN
UNDERSTANDING BY THOSE
WHO VIEW IT. ART IS A
COMMEMORATIVE MEMORIAL
TO THE EMOTIONS AND
EXPERIENCES OF A FORMER
TIME AND FORMER LIVES OF
OUR PEOPLE WHO WALKED
THIS LAND OF THEIRS NOT SO
LONG AGO, IT IS ALSO A PART
OF WHO WE ARE TODAY.**

Jenny Murray-Jones



JENNY MURRAY-JONES
 (Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Trees and Ferns
 1997
 pastel on paper
 Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
 Purchased 2001
 AH 02841

a curator who worked at the KHT in the 1990s in the curatorial section, reflect on the visual impact of Jenny's work:

Bryan Andy: I imagine your work at the Koorie Heritage Trust would have allowed you to foster a lot of connections with mob from all over the south-east of our country. Who are some of the people and communities you worked with? Who are some of the community members who've inspired you on that journey?

Belinda Briggs: I do remember many artworks and artists whose works made an impression on me: Lin Onus, Ray Thomas, Kevin Williams, Les Griggs, Kelly Koumalatsos, Jenny Murray-Jones, Gayle Maddigan, Lyn Thorpe, Tommy McRae, Aunty Connie Hart, Aunty Edith Terrick, Aunty Dot Peters... so many more!

My memories of exhibitions are vague. I do remember one exhibition titled Yakapna – a Yorta Yorta word that translates to mean 'family'. I remember Jenny's paintings and works illustrating the impact of colonisation; in particular, the impact of Christianity on First Peoples living on missions. One of her works depicts gorgeous little girls with sad faces dressed in white, perhaps ready for Sunday school or church, and in the background a building with a cross on it (Nets Victoria, 2025).

Jenny's work often focuses on her family history, particularly love and loss that has weaved through her family lines over generations. Her work depicts oppression and control resulting from the actions of government and religious organisations, and ongoing prejudice from the broader community (Murray-Jones, 2017). In channelling her memories, expressions and emotions, she continues to create strikingly visual works that depict life and connection to Country, distinctly recording the Australian fabric of eucalyptus, light, the passing of time, and reflection. In her

FROM CUMMERAGUNJA TO MITCHAM MY GRANDMOTHER GUARDED HER SECRETS AND GAVE LITTLE INFORMATION TO HER FAMILY OF HER LIFE AND ITS STRUGGLES. LITTLE DID WE KNOW THAT BACK IN BALRANALD THERE WAS ANOTHER PART OF THE FAMILY WHO WERE GRIEVING THE LOSS OF THEIR TWO SISTERS REMOVED AROUND 1915, JUST PRIOR TO THE DEATH OF MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER.

Jenny Murray-Jones

PhD studies, Jenny amalgamated elements of her family history with historical events that have impacted her family, many of which resonate with other Indigenous families: the impact of disease on First Peoples, massacres, forced relocation to missions, lives of servitude, and the struggle for rights that continues to this day. Oppression and injustice remain fresh in our minds, and their legacy continues to impact our people. Jenny's artwork also highlights the current protocols in storytelling. Her artwork highlights the ownership of personal and family stories that are shaped by the impact of government policies, particularly grief and loss associated with the forced separation of families. Separation in all its forms is juxtaposed with the care and safety of culture and Country, which are integral to First Peoples' core identity and feelings of connection (Murray-Jones, 2017).

Jenny is the "second daughter of the late Norman Jones (birth name Murray) and the late Shirley Jones (née Bawden)", who was also an artist (watercolourist). "Norm was the daughter of Bill Murray and Lya Priscilla Atkinson. Jenny's grandmother, Mollie (known as Nanna Epp), was born at Cummeroogunja [Cummeragunja] around 1902. Sometime around 1915, the family moved to Kyalite on the banks of the Wakool." (Koorie Heritage Trust Inc, 2000, p.3). The family were later relocated to Balranald Mission. Like so many First Peoples women forced into servitude, Mollie and her sister Bessy were removed from their family at the mission to be trained as domestics.

The artworks Jenny produced as part of her PhD thesis were exhibited at William Mora Galleries on 9 March 2017. Jenny provided the following statement for the exhibition:

I am a Yorta Yorta/Baraparapa/Wiradjuri woman. My grandmother, Mollie Murray, was born at Cummeragunja Mission near Barmah, NSW. My grandmother and great-aunt were taken from their family around 1915, from Redgate Station Balranald.



JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Yanga
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones

My grandmother was raised in an institution and became a domestic. In the 1970s she broke down as she watched a television program about the Stolen Generations, and told my uncle what had happened to her as a child. She shared very little with family about her past as she would have been the victim of 'whitewashing', and forbidden to return to her family. My father was put in the homes from a young age, and he too suffered the isolation of institutional life.

My practice-led research aims to rediscover and reclaim knowledge of family, people and place, and our connection to Country by focussing on the experiences of my own family. My research involved obtaining oral histories from family members and researching government archives in order to disclose information in regard to their lives. Many field trips on Country with Elders and other family members have revealed and assisted in forming a body of work which operates to fill the voids and gaps in our lives in regard to reclaiming and celebrating our culture and identity.

— **WILLIAM MORA GALLERIES, 2017**

This revealing quote from Jenny clearly articulates the pain and brutal injustices that continue to have ripple effects for the Stolen Generations and impact family kinship systems. The importance of connecting and documenting family experiences as a living history, especially historical events that impacted her father, continues to influence Jenny's practice.

Jenny's 2017 exhibition resonated with me because of our similar family circumstances. When I worked with Jenny at the KHT in 2000, I discovered our fathers were First Peoples train drivers in the Wimmera region. Her father worked for the Victorian Railways when the family lived in Goroke. The Victorian Railways provided employment for many families in regional areas, and our fathers may have come across



JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Custody
1996
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
Purchased 1996
AH 02487

each other during their working careers. Despite experiencing setbacks, prejudice and limited opportunities, our fathers were wonderful role models. Most upsetting, though, is learning about Jenny's father's early years as a ward of the state, and his experiences of institutionalisation from time spent at Sunbury's Rupertswood, and Tally-Ho Boys' Training Farm in Burwood. He continually tried to escape from both institutions during his initial stays. These institutions were notorious for their lack of love, and the wrenching of children from their families was a cruel, unjust and unfair practice. Many children continued to experience heartbreak and trauma throughout their lives. Despite such adversity, Jenny's father always managed to locate his mother and remained a caring father (Jenny Murray-Jones, 2017).

The family later moved to Mitcham where Jenny attended Mitcham Technical School and had some wonderful art mentors. Although up until this point Jenny was a figurative painter heavily influenced by nature, themes starting to emerge in her paintings, such as child removal, missions, domestic work, children's homes, farm work, rivers, and key family members and friends (Jenny Murray-Jones, 2000). As Jenny recounts:

I also love to draw from nature. I love the colours and textures of the landscape, the rich red soils and the contours of the land, the giant gum trees and the tree ferns. All of these things are part of who we are, they are our identity. Through my art I want to create the images which are a part of our identity.

— JENNY MURRAY-JONES, 2000

Jenny's devotion to a range of post-secondary studies culminated in extremely insightful research for her PhD titled *Indigenous Families: Beyond the Voids of Colonial History* (2017), which investigated her family history and drew from her travels on Country. Her research into her family used a technique that incorporates creative storytelling found in her paintings and drawings, some of

I SOMETIMES THINK OF SOME OF THE STORIES MY AUNTY DAWN OR UNCLE BES HAVE TOLD ME OR THE LITTLE SNIPPETS OF THINGS WHICH MY AUNTY AUDREY HAS TOLD ME ABOUT, THESE ARE OUR HISTORY AND I DRAW FROM THE IMAGES THESE HAVE CREATED IN MY MIND. MY IMAGES ARE AN EXPRESSION OF MY CULTURAL IDENTITY IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD.

Jenny Murray-Jones



which form part of this exhibition. Jenny graduated from the institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University with a double degree in Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching Secondary, where her major areas of study were Visual Arts and Performing Arts. She has taught at the Koorie Unit Chisholm Institute Dandenong and secondary schools. She also obtained a Graduate Certificate of Higher Education (Deakin University) and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD practice exegesis, Deakin University). Jenny has also worked as a sessional academic at Deakin University, and has immersed herself into art practice involving processes such as printmaking, graphic design, performing arts and textiles.

In 2003, Jenny's artworks formed part of the exhibit *CON-SENT-TRICK SIR-KILLS* at the Linden Centre, St Kilda. In 2006, she worked with Gippsland-based arts group The Wild Dogs from Down Under. Jenny exhibited with fellow artist and friend, Eileen Harrison, at the KHT for *Our home Our Place*. In 2017, Jenny exhibited at William Mora Gallery in an exhibition titled *Ancestors*. Her works have been displayed at the Baw Baw Shire Council, Burrunga Gallery, NGV NAIDOC exhibition, West Gippsland Art Centre, Maryborough Gallery, the Koorie Heritage Trust and in Jiu Jian, Yangzi Province, China. They also form part of the Geelong City Council collection.

This exhibition coincides with the National Reconciliation Week 2025 theme Bridging Now to Next, which emphasises the ongoing connection between past, present and future. The exhibition also acknowledges the 2025 NAIDOC theme of Next Generation: Strength, Vision and Legacy, which celebrates achievements of the past, encourages a bright future, and empowers young leaders.

JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
To Nanna Epp (detail)
1997
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
Purchased 1997
AH 02402



JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Aggie's Swamp
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones

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JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Murrumbidgee Spirit (detail)
2021
oil on Belgian Linen
Collection of Milly Hook



List of Works

JENNY MURRAY-JONES

(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)



1. *Coming Home*
1999
oil on canvas
837 x 1217 x 23 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03007



3. *Possum skin cloak*
2003
oil and wax on canvas
942 x 1241 x 41 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03434



6. *Lomandra basket*
2000
natural fibre
85 x 291 x 287 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03047



8. *To Nanna Epp*
1997
oil on canvas
1203 x 1506 x 52 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02402



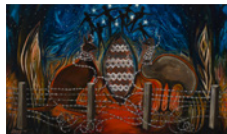
10. *Trees and ferns*
1997
pastel on paper
900 x 679 x 34 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02841



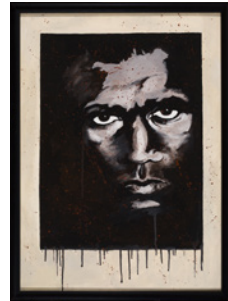
12. *Campfire, Little Desert*
date not recorded
oil on canvas
632 x 888 x 30 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03395



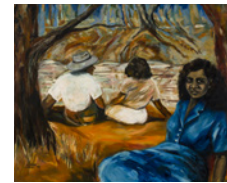
2. *Small portrait study of Dad*
1998
watercolour and charcoal on paper
371 x 330 x 34 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02879



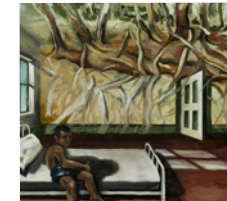
4. *National Identity*
2000
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
610 x 1000 x 45 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02665



7. *Custody*
1996
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
898 x 665 x 46 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02487



9. *Talking in the old language*
1999
oil on canvas
1203 x 1506 x 52 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03006



11. *Home*
1998
oil on canvas
904 x 1008 x 48 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 03008



13. *Suburban back yard*
2000
oil on canvas
1165 x 992 x 45 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02707



5. *Suburban front yard*
2000
oil on canvas
995 x 1245 x 45 mm
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02706

List of Works



14. *Piggery Lake*
2017
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



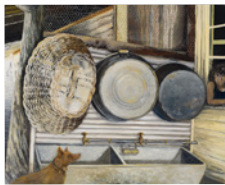
17. *Talpee*
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



20. *Rupertswood*
2021
oil on Belgian linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



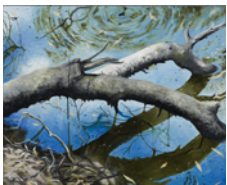
15. *Aggie's Swamp*
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



18. *Yanga*
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



21. *This is where they wanted us to be*
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



16. *Ben*
2014
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones



19. *Murrumbidgee Spirit*
2021
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Milly Hook



22. *The Island*
2017
oil on Belgian Linen
1120 x 1370 x 30 mm
Collection of Jenny Murray-Jones

COMING HOME: JENNY MURRAY-JONES

31 May – 10 August 2025

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Catalogue Design and Exhibition Identity

Hours After

Inside back cover:
JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
National Identity
2000
acrylic on canvas
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
AH 02665

Front and back cover:
JENNY MURRAY-JONES
(Yorta Yorta, Baraparapa, Wiradjuri)
Coming Home (detail)
1999
oil on canvas
Collection of Koorie Heritage Trust
Purchased 2000
AH 03007



KOORIE
HERITAGE
TRUST

40



Australian Government



CREATIVE
VICTORIA



Australian Government
Intelligent. Savant. Get. Industry. Support

MURRAY
JONES '99

