

A Story to Tell...

About the exhibition

In **A Story to Tell**, Nyoongar artist Laurel Nannup tells her own story, through woodcuts, etchings and photographs. These works illustrate the artist's memories of place, particular events and people, all of which contribute to an overview of her life.

At the age of eight, the Native Welfare Department took Laurel, her sister and her cousin away from the Pinjarra region and their families, to the Wandering Mission where they lived and worked until they were old enough to work on farms in the area. The prints in Laurel's exhibition are a reflection of her life, both with her family and mission life; the stories are told with honesty and affectionate humour and build up a unique picture of the reality of life for many Indigenous people of Laurel Nannup's generation.

The collection of works that make up **A Story to Tell** comprise woodcuts, screen prints and etchings, together with a selection of photographs.



Me, 2004, woodcut,
580x765mm

"These stories are of my experiences as a young child and a teenager. I feel I need to leave some stories behind. It is important for me to record my stories because throughout my younger life I felt I didn't know much about my culture, except the little bits Dad told me. My son would often ask me things about my culture and I felt I had no stories to tell. But once I started at Curtin Uni and got talking with the other Nyoongars, I began to remember certain things that happened in my life and I realised that these are my stories. They are my life."

Laurel Nannup, **A Story to Tell**, 2006

Laurel produced the etching, left, to illustrate a dream she had when at university. She had reached a point where she was uncertain whether to continue her studies when an old Nyoongar man appeared in front of her in her dream asking "what road are you going to take?"



What road are you going to take?, 2001
etching, 585x585mm

"After the dream, I decided to continue on at uni. I believe he was my grandad telling me to finish my studies."

Laurel Nannup

"As a young Nyoongar girl growing up in the bush, I learnt a lot from my parents and grandparents about the old ways. They taught me how to find water, how to track animals and how to find food to eat, when I was hungry. My family and I lived in the bush around the Pinjarra region, where Mum and Dad worked on farms, felling trees to make fence posts for the farmers. They also worked on dairy farms where they would milk the cows and stook hay for the cows' feed. From time to time we lived on the Pinjarra Reserve with my grandparents and other relatives until my sister, Cecelia, my cousin Madeline and I were taken away by the Native Welfare, I was just eight years old. We were sent to the Wandering Mission where I spent the next eight years of my life. I don't remember much about the trip to the Mission, I just remember Mum bathing us and putting on new clothes on us, that's all I remember about that event."

Laurel Nannup, *A Story to Tell*, 2006

Laurel Nannup was born in Carrolup, WA in 1943. She completed postgraduate studies at Curtin University of Technology in 2001, after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) in 2000. Laurel has exhibited widely, including a solo exhibition *Boodja (Country)* at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (2005) and has been a recipient of a number of public and private commissions.



Pinjarra Reserve, 2007
hand-coloured etching, 278x408mm



First he would fell a tree, 2001
etching, 580x582mm

The artist working in her studio, 2007

A Story to Tell...

The artist and printmaking

Inspired by the prints of Australian artist Salvatore Zofrea, Laurel Nannup has used the artform of printmaking to tell the stories of her life in her exhibition **A Story to Tell**. Laurel has used a range of different printmaking techniques to illustrate different events and episodes in her life from when she was quite young, living with her family in the Pinjarra region, through mission life, to when she worked on farms in her late teenage years.

Laurel is an accomplished printmaker, enjoying the processes which allow her to express her ideas in a graphic, succinct manner. The print processes she has explored through this exhibition are:

- Etching
- Photographic etching
- Aquatint
- Woodcut
- Photographic screen printing.

She has also hand-coloured a number of prints that appear in the exhibition.