

# NAOMI HOBSON PAYAMU - TO SHINE



VIVIEN  
ANDERSON  
GALLERY



Umpila men preparing for malkarti (ceremony)  
Masey River, Umpila Country

*'Most of the time I paint what I feel and what I see. My life experiences also help me to create. Every day is different light, another hue. As the seasons change, the landscape evolves; it blooms and burns and sprouts and falls – it's never stationary.'*

When my mother Naomi Hobson was born, my great grandfather gave her the name Yikan. In Kaantju language, Yikan means 'hoop pine' and is known to grow in abundance on Hobson's mother's Country of Ngallabidgi on the McIlwraith Ranges. For Kaantju people, it is our close affiliation with our Country, our kin and our art that keeps our puuya (spirit) strong.

Naomi Hobson is a multidisciplinary artist of Kaantju and Umpila descent. Born in 1978 in Far North Queensland, Hobson spent much of her formative years on Country with her grandparents. The bush is her refuge and is the place she feels most connected. Through her art she captures the places and stories that surround her community of Coen.

Situated in the heart of Cape York Peninsula, Coen is a township of around 350 people. The town was established as a gold mine in 1876, and soon became the centre for the fledgling Cape York Peninsula gold fields. Notable among the colonial history of the region was the introduction of police reserves, controlled areas which were stationed in Coen and along the Telegraph Route to 'protect' what was seen as a valuable communication asset. In reality, however, it rounded up Indigenous people within the reserve to manage and control their movement. The coming of the pastoral industry in these frontier times further curtailed the free movement of the Indigenous people and concentrated them on cattle stations within the strict confines of their immediate traditional lands, restricting travel between the outstations and Coen.

"When I think of Coen, I think of my old people, who despite enormous hardship, they survived and have passed on to us a future full of opportunity". Hobson's pula (father's father) was a founding member of the Cape York Land Council and was a leading voice for Cape York Pama. Our old people saw the challenges that their children faced as a result of colonisation and fought to establish self-determination that would help their people in the future.

Carrying the language of her Ancestors through her art, Hobson is forging her own path as a cultural leader and activist for her people in Cape York. Through her practice, she continues to push boundaries, tapping into a variety of art mediums and aesthetics. As a skilled painter, ceramicist and photographer, Hobson uses the language of art as a tool to discuss broader social and societal issues within her community. She is a master of her craft and with each medium she undertakes, provides a poignant and carefully considered narrative that invites viewers into her lived reality. She is currently working with young people from her community, photographing their everyday lived experiences in hope to instill a sense of pride and acceptance.

This exhibition of works, titled *Payamu*, symbolises radiance and the shining of light. The body of work connects Hobson's stories between the water and the sky, like a journey across Country. It is an adventurous exploration into colour, composition and mark-making techniques. Through balanced composition and heavily rendered markings, Hobson flaunts her technical capabilities as a painter, translating stories and places from her Country directly onto canvas.



Each painting is layered with meaning and stories from Country and places from her youth. Utilising a vivacious colour palette, Hobson's work showcases a rhythmic beauty and movement that traverses the surface of the canvas. Among the most important aspects of her work is her understanding of the emotional response between the landscape and the canvas. Hobson uses colour and line to convey how she is feeling, and to provide audiences with a strong emotional response to her work.

*'I can't help but to feel everything around me. As an artist for me, my feelings are channelled through my practice. Over the last few days I have been feeling the colour red... visually it's not my favourite colour maybe because it's so challenging to work with, however in me it has always been a colour of strength and being grounded, and I can't help but to feel my people right now. The way I am dealing with everything is through my marks I am making. I feel red is revealing itself in a way to me that signifies coming together and being strong as one people we are powerful.'*

*Deeper* was created at the height of the Black Lives Matter protests in America and around the world. For Hobson, channelling her emotions through her art has always been a powerful form of healing. As she explains, the work began with strong red markings slashed across the surface of the blank white canvas. Red being her response to pain and to trauma as a result of police brutality. Gradually, as if mending a wound, Hobson added layers and layers of different hues. The soft pastel blues were used to bring calm and peace to the work. Hobson says that blue reminds her of her saltwater Country and her connection to the saltwater has always been a source of refuge and strength. Connecting with her Ancestors on a deeper level, Hobson's response to colour is spiritual and is a way of honouring her Ancestors through her art.

*'I explore painting as a connection to my Country. As my painting evolves, I am always thinking about my Ancestors. I can't help but to feel them in my colours, they are my marks on the canvas.'*

Hobson's strong emotional response to colour, and her ability to capture her feelings in bold expressive markings is exciting. She invites the viewer into her reality, and with each application of paint, unveils her personal journey to healing. For Hobson, her Country has always been the primary source of inspiration in her work. She looks for the intimate and often unnoticed details of the land - the changing colours of the leaves during the passing of the dry season and the shimmering of light across the surface of the water's edge. All of these subtle changes are manifested into an idea that Hobson translates directly onto canvas in a beautiful and eloquent way. She is always pushing the boundaries and searching for new ideas and signs from Country.

*'Perspective through my work, I'm always looking for movement, as my environment and landscape is ever changing and never still.'*

Hobson is a contemporary artist of daring flair and virtuosity, who is constantly pushing the boundaries of her creative practice. Her paintings are a rich visual documentation of her Ancestral Country and the stories and places associated with it. *Payamu* is an ambitious body of work that flaunts Hobson's adventurous painting techniques. When we see her work, we are immediately reminded of the lyrical beauty of Cape York Peninsula and its spectacular terrains.

Shonae Hobson, Kaantju, First Nations Curator Bendigo Art Gallery



*Deeper* 2020  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 210 x 208 cm





*Feel the Sun 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



*June Sky 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 210 x 210 cm





A river on the Mcllwraith Range  
Kaantju country, Ngallabidgee



*Edge of the River* 2020  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 210 x 251 cm





*Sea Marks 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 100 x 100 cm



*A Passing Moment 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 130 x 160 cm





Naomi Hobson



*Festivity Land 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 208 x 208 cm





*Drama in the Bush* 2020  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 130 x 160 cm



*A windy night on the coast* 2020  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 155 x 155 cm





*Collecting Wild Hibiscus 2020*  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

## NAOMI HOBSON

born 1978  
language Kaantju/Umpila  
lives Coen, Far North Queensland

### EXHIBITION HISTORY

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *Payamu - To Shine*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 2019 *Journey to the East*, Suzanne O'Connell, Brisbane QLD  
*Naomi Hobson, Clay Poles, IWAYI*, Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), Cairns QLD  
*Adolescent Wonderland*, Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns QLD
- 2018 *Times Have Changed*, Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane QLD  
*New Beginnings*, Redot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore, Singapore
- 2017 *Time and Place: Naomi Hobson*, Art Mob Aboriginal Fine Art, Hobart TAS  
*Naomi Hobson*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 2016 *Kanichi - On Top People*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 2015 *Ngaachi Ngunama - Story Place*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 2014 *Ngaachi Paapa - My Mother's Country*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
*Seven Sisters and the Bonefish Story*, Depot II represented by Alcaston Gallery, Sydney NSW
- 2013 *I am Yikan*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC

#### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 *The 41st Alice Prize: National Contemporary Art Award*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs NT  
*The Women's Show*, Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
*Know My Name*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra ACT
- 2019 *Sunshine Coast Art Prize*, Caloundra Regional Gallery, Caloundra QLD  
*Journey Through Culture*, Redot Fine Art Gallery, Tarnanthi Art Festival, Adelaide SA  
*I, OBJECT*, Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of

- Modern Art, Brisbane QLD  
*Body Politics: Contemporary Works from the Collection*, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo VIC  
*Guirguis New Art Prize 19*, Federation University, Ballarat VIC
- 2018 *From Bark to Neon: Indigenous Art from the NGV Collection*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne VIC  
*Naomi Hobson and the Kalan Clay House*, Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal, Cairns QLD  
*Mixed Blood - Contemporary Indigenous Cultural Expression*, Tanks Art Centre, Cairns QLD  
*San Francisco Tribal & Textile Art Fair: Art of Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americans*, San Francisco, California, USA
- 2017 *Australasian Painters 2007 - 2017: Artist Profile 10th Anniversary*, Orange Regional Gallery & Orange Regional Museum, Orange NSW  
*Sunshine Coast Art Prize*, Caloundra Regional Gallery, Caloundra QLD  
*Sydney Contemporary*, presented by Alcaston Gallery, Sydney NSW  
*Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2017*, Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal, Cairns QLD  
*Time and Tide*, Alcaston Gallery as part of the Art+Climate=Change 2017 Festival, Melbourne VIC  
*The Extractive Frontier: Mining for Art*, Castlemaine VIC
- 2016 *Kinship, Country & Women's Australian Indigenous Art*, International Education Services, Brisbane QLD  
*Len Fox Painting Award*, Castlemaine Art Gallery, Castlemaine VIC  
*Geelong Contemporary Art Prize*, Geelong Gallery, Geelong VIC  
*33rd Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT  
*All About Art*, Alcaston Gallery at Depot Gallery, Sydney NSW  
*Provenance Does Matter - Living with Contemporary Art*, Alcaston Gallery at Gallery



369, Bendigo VIC  
 DENFAIR, Melbourne Exhibition Centre,  
 presented by Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
*The 39th Alice Prize: National Contemporary  
 Art Award*, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs  
 NT  
*Provenance Does Matter - the Collector's  
 Exhibition*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
 2015 *ArtNow Far North Queensland*, Cairns  
 Regional Gallery, Cairns QLD  
*All About Art: Brisbane*, White Canvas Gallery,  
 presented by Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
*Sydney Contemporary 15*, Carriageworks,  
 presented by Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
*32nd Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres  
 Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art  
 Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT  
*Out of Queensland: New Indigenous Textiles*,  
 Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns, QLD  
*Goma Q*, Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of  
 Modern Art, Brisbane QLD  
 2014 *31st Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres  
 Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art  
 Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT  
*Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2014*, Cairns Cruise  
 Liner Terminal, Cairns QLD  
*Gold Coast Art Prize*, Gold Coast City Gallery,  
 Surfer Paradise QLD  
*Masterpiece London 2014*, South Grounds,  
 The Royal Hospital, Chelsea London UK  
 2013 *Gold Coast Art Prize*, Gold Coast City Gallery,  
 Surfer Paradise QLD  
*Kinship – A Celebration of Fine Art from Far  
 North Queensland Indigenous Art Centres*,  
 Tanks Art Centre, Cairns QLD  
*'Ngampula Kuunchi - We are family'*, Lockhart  
 River Art Group, Emerge Art Space,  
 Inglewood WA  
 2012/2013 *Land and Water/Ancient and Modern:  
 Contemporary paintings from Lockhart River*,  
 Booker Lowe Gallery, Houston Texas USA  
 2012 *Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2012*, Cairns Cruise  
 Liner Terminal, Cairns QLD  
*Lockhart River Art*, Art Atrium, Sydney NSW  
 2009 *Taralinga*, Woolloongabba Art Gallery,  
 Brisbane QLD  
*Some of Us*, Tandanya National Aboriginal  
 Cultural Institute, Adelaide SA

2008 *Arimidale Cultural Art Fair*, Armidale NSW  
*Black Roots*, Kick Arts Gallery, Cairns QLD

#### AWARDS AND COMMISSIONS

2019 "Royal Harvest" - Australian Tapestry  
 Workshop tenth embassy commission  
 2018 Winner - Photography, Cairns Indigenous Art  
 Fair Art Awards  
 2017 Highly Commended - ceramics (Malkarti  
 Poles) Cairns Indigenous Art Fair Art Awards  
 2016 Winner - The 39th Alice Prize: National  
 Contemporary Art Award

#### COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra ACT  
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne VIC  
 Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney NSW  
 Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art,  
 Brisbane QLD  
 Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide SA  
 Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory,  
 Darwin NT  
 Araluen Art Collection, Alice Springs NT  
 HOTA – Home of the Arts, Surfers Paradise QLD  
 Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo VIC  
 Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns QLD  
 ArtBank, Sydney NSW  
 Macquarie University Art Collection, Sydney NSW  
 Cairns Regional Council Collection, Cairns QLD  
 Stuartholme School, Toowong, QLD  
 US Consul General, Brisbane QLD  
 International Education Services, Indigenous Art  
 Collection, Brisbane QLD  
 Leeuwin Estate Collection, Margaret River WA  
 Viva Energy Collection, Australia  
 Sir Elton John Collection, London UK  
 Christian Louboutin, Private Collection  
 Brocard-Estrangin Collection, France

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Art Collector, 2014 'Debutantes - 50 things Collectors  
 need to know,' Issue 67, Jan-March  
 Artichaut, 2019, 'New Beginnings, Naomi Hobson',  
 Issue #5, October  
 Bendigo Advertiser, 2019, *Hobson reveals the true*

*nature of the warrior*, Friday January 11  
 Elliot, S. 2018, 'Malkarti Poles (Dancing Poles)',  
*ArtLines*, Issue 1, March, pp 54-55  
 Fairley, G. 2019, 'Review: Naomi Hobson, Adolescent  
 Wonderland', *ArtsHub*, Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns QLD  
 16th July  
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 Country, Art History, *Alice Springs News*, 18th April  
 Halves, T. 2014, 'Naomi Hobson: Painting with Local  
 Ingredients', *ADFAS bulletin*  
 Henderson-Smart, S. 2015, 'Colours of Country',  
*OUTthere Airthnorth*, January, Issue 127, pp 32-33  
 Hobson, N. 2015, 'Comment: Reform Help Cape York  
 Community, Potshots from Afar', *Brisbane Times*,  
 Saturday, 12th December  
 Hobson, N. 2016, 'Process: Naomi Hobson', *Artist  
 Profile*, Issue 36, pp 132-134  
 Journal of Australian Ceramics, 2019, 'My Connection  
 with Clay', Vol.58 No.3, pp 94-95, November  
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*Art Collector*, issue 77, July September, pp 126-127  
 Mckay, P. 2015, 'Goma Q: Contemporary Queensland  
 Art', *Artlink Magazine*, Queensland Art Gallery,  
 Brisbane pp 10-11  
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 Creative Women*, Volume 3 (September)  
 Indigenous Art Centre Alliance. 2013, *Kinship - A  
 celebration of Fine Art from Far North Queensland  
 Indigenous Art Centres* (exh cat), Cairns QLD  
 Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, 2015,  
*Goma Q: Contemporary Queensland Art* (exh cat), pp  
 54-55  
 Rothwell, N. 2014, 'Twin Streams to the Heart of  
 Artist's World', *The Australian*, Thursday, October 2,  
 p. 14  
 The Age, 2013, 'Hobson's choice a Cape of Good  
 Hope', Friday June 14, p. 12  
 Wagstaff, C, 2019, 'FROM THE EARTH', *Art Collector  
 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2019* (Special Edition), July,  
 pp 46-47





NAOMI HOBSON  
PAYAMU - TO SHINE

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