

Thea Anamara Perkins.

b. 1992, raised on Gadigal Country / Sydney, with family ties to Redfern community
Arrernte and Kalkadoon language groups
Lives and works on Gadigal Country / Sydney

'It's about taking charge of representation – I find that painting is a very simple and direct way of communicating things that I want to say.'

Thea Anamara Perkins is an Arrernte and Kalkadoon artist whose practice incorporates portraiture and landscape to question representations of First Nations peoples and Country. With a delicate hand, Thea answers heavy questions about what it means to be First Nations in contemporary Australia, and interrogates portrayal.

Thea's middle name Anamara is an Arrernte word that describes a river and a Dreaming that runs north of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) – the place that keeps calling her back and has been the wellspring of art and activism for her family, and by extension, the nation. Perkins continues her family's commitment to what she calls "strong and ready communication" and is part of an extraordinary dynasty of First Nations activists and creatives that includes activist Charles Perkins (her grandfather), Arrernte elder Hetti Perkins (her great-grandmother), curator Hetti Perkins (her mother) and acclaimed film director Rachel Perkins (her aunt).

Perkins routinely delves into her family's photographic archive for source material, attracted by the hyper-saturated, almost cinematic, glow of old photos, and the melancholia that comes with seeing a moment in time you can no longer access. She is most drawn to snapshots that evoke feelings of comfort and certainty – smiling faces, happy memories. The glimmer, she calls it. Her compositions hone in on this by removing the background noise, reducing the photo to its very essence – a gesture, a colour, or an evocation of place.

Raised and based in Sydney, Thea has family ties to the Redfern community and has worked in a broad range of community projects. Thea was the recipient of the 2023 La Prairie Art Award, administered by The Art Gallery of NSW, and won the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship in 2021, and the Alice Prize & Dreaming Award in 2020.



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EDUCATION

2015 University of NSW Art and Design (deferred)

AWARDS

- 2024 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (finalist)
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (finalist)
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (finalist)
- 2023 La Prairie Art Award, Art Gallery of New South Wales (recipient)
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney (finalist)
- 2022 Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney (finalist)
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales (finalist)
- 2021 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, Brett Whiteley Studio (winner)
Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory (finalist)
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW (finalist)
- 2020 The 41st Alice Prize National Contemporary Art Award, Araluen Arts Centre (winner)
Dreaming Award for Emerging Artists, Australia Council First Nations Arts Awards (winner)
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW (finalist)
- 2019 Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, Brett Whiteley Studio (finalist)
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW (finalist)

GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

- 2024 Artspace One Year Studio Program, Sydney
- 2023 La Prairie Art Prize residency, Europe
Cité Internationale des Arts Residency, Paris
- 2022 The Clothing Store Artist Studios residency, Carriageworks
- 2022 Shark Island Institute, Kangaroo Valley, NSW
- 2021 The Clothing Store Artist Studios residency, Carriageworks
- 2020 The Clothing Store Artist Studios residency, Carriageworks
- 2019 The Clothing Store Artist Studios residency, Carriageworks

COLLECTIONS

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, NSW
Mackay Artspace, Mackay
Araluen Art and Culture Precinct, Alice Springs
University of Sydney, Sydney
La Trobe University, Melbourne
Mudoch University Art Collection, Perth
Charles Darwin University Art Collection and Art Gallery, Darwin
Queensland Children's Hospital, Brisbane
Slattery Collection, Sydney
Paul Ramsay Foundation, Sydney

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
Private collections in Singapore, and Hong Kong

COMMISSIONS

- 2025 Google doodle of Ruby Hunter
Curlew Camp Commission, Mosman Art Gallery
- 2024 La Trobe University
- 2022 University of Sydney
Paul Ramsay Foundation
- 2021 WISH magazine cover, The Australian newspaper
Faces of Sydney Festival, City of Sydney
- 2020 Clothilde, Vogue Australia

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025 Dualities, Mackay Artspace, Mackay
memory mirage, Australian Embassy, Germany
- 2024 Dreaming, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
sunset sequence, Cement Fondu Project Space, Sydney
- 2023 Atherreyurre, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Lhere, Art Gallery of NSW, as part of The National 4: Australian Art Now, Sydney
- 2022 Stockwoman, Carriageworks, Sydney
Pwarrtyeme, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
That Which Endures, Verge Gallery, University of Sydney
- 2021 Eight Views of the Telegraph Station, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Shimmer, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
- 2020 Glimmer, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane
- 2019 Anamara, Our Neon Foe, Sydney
- 2018 History House, Firstdraft, Sydney

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026 Summer '26, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
- 2025 5th National Indigenous Art Triennial: After the Rain, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Too Deadly: Ten Years of Tarnanthi, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
Curlew Camp, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
The Interior, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Summer '25, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Melbourne Art Fair, N.Smith Gallery booth, Melbourne
Art Fair Tokyo, N.Smith Gallery booth, Tokyo
The Intelligence of Painting, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- 2024 Sydney Contemporary, N.Smith Gallery Galleries booth
New South: Recent painting from Southern Australia, Hazelhurst Gallery
Art Fair Tokyo, Japan
Melbourne Art Fair, Melbourne
Garden at the End of Time, Tin Sheds, Sydney
Sunrise, Sunset, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
- 2023 Atherreyurre, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Sydney Contemporary, Sydney
Cloud 9, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney

- Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
- 2022 Mosman Art Prize, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney
Wynne Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, N.Smith Gallery booth, Cairns
I will tell you my story, UTS Gallery, Sydney
InlandSee, Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW
Melbourne Art Fair, N.Smith Gallery Booth, Melbourne
Substratum, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, Sydney
- 2021 Brett Whiteley Travelling Scholarship, Brett Whiteley Studio, Sydney
Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum and Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin
Opening Exhibition: Welcome, N.Smith Gallery, Sydney
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
- 2020 From My Window: Together In Art, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
My Imagination, Edwina Corlette Gallery, Brisbane
- 2019 TARNANTHI, Art Gallery of SA, Adelaide
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney
- 2018 The Waves, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- ABC Radio, 'Thea Anamara Perkins is named the 2023 La Prairie Art Award Recipient' in 'The Stars Descend, and the return of the Birrarangga Film Festival', Rudi Bremer, 18 March 2023
- Art Collector, 'Thea Anamara Perkins to be the recipient of the 2023 edition of award supporting women artists', Erin Irwin, 16 March 2023
- Sydney Morning Herald, 'Thea Anamara Perkins wins La Prairie Art Award', Nick Galvin, 14 March 2023
- Broadsheet, 'Thea Anamara Perkins Wins the Second Annual La Prairie Art Award', Jane Albert, 14 March 2023
- National Indigenous Times, 'From intimate moments to international residency: Arrernte and Kalkadoon artist claims sought-after prize', Jarred Cross, 15 March 2023
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- RUSSH, 'Thea Anamara Perkins is the 2023 recipient of the La Prairie Art Award', Jasmine Pirovic, 14 March 2023
- Grazia, 'La Prairie Art Award: The Stirring Works of Thea Anamara Perkins', Jessica Bailey, 15 March 2023
- Gourmet Traveller, 'Interview with Thea Anamara Perkins, winner of La Prairie Art Award 2023', 14 March 2023
- Art Guide Australia, 'Interview: Thea Anamara Perkins on "communicating through love"', Autumn Royal, 25 January 2023
- Art Almanac, 'Thea Anamara Perkins: Stockwoman', 24 January 2023
- InStyle Magazine, 'Thea Anamara Perkins Reimagines The Mythology Of Australia', Courtney Thompson, 2022
- NITV, 'The great-granddaughter of Arrernte legend Hetty Perkins has created this amazing tribute to her', Ricky Kirby, 20 December 2022
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- Art Collector Magazine, 'NATSIAA 2021', Daniel Browning, #98 Oct – Dec 2021

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Hunter & Folk, 'The 2021 Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards', Emma-Kate Wilson, 8 August 2021
Vogue Living, '3 Australian First Nations artists on truth-telling through their work', Alexia Petsinis, 28 July 2021
A Rich Life, 'Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards' + Interview with 2021 finalist Thea Perkins', Kirsty Francis, 21 July 2021
Sydney Morning Herald, 'Why Now is the Right Time for Thea Perkins to Take on Grandfather Charles' Image', Kerrie O'Brien, 15 July 2021
Inside Out, 'Thea Anamara Perkins', Laura Barry, 8 July 2021
WISH Magazine, 'Brilliant, Bold, & Beautiful', Matthew Westwood, 4 June 2021
The Design Files, 'The Amazing Art-Making Of Thea Anamara Perkins', Sasha Gattermayr, 4 June 2021
The Australian, 'Perkins Family new star', Matthew Westwood, 2 June, 2021
Art Collector, '50 Things | Notable Accolades', Lisa Slade, Issue #95, 2021
Vogue Australia, 'Meet the 5 changemakers educating the public on Indigenous and First Nations art', Myles Russell-Cook, 11 November 2020
The Australian newspaper, 'A famous name in the frame', The Australian, Matthew Westwood, 28 May 2020
Sydney Morning Herald 'Thea Perkins wins \$20,000 First Nations emerging artist award', Kerrie O'Brien, 27 May 2020
ABC News, 'Indigenous artist Thea Perkins, who is the granddaughter of legendary activist Charlie Perkins, helped to restore the mural', Meredith Griffiths, 28 April 2018