## JOHN PRINCE SIDDON

Disco Dreamtime Drums





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Cement Fondu 16 March – 5 May 2024 36 Gosbell St, Paddington NSW 2021

In partnership with Mangkaja Arts Resource Centre, Cement Fondu is excited to present a major new commission solo exhibition by Walmajarri artist John Prince Siddon, *Disco Dreamtime Drums*, Guest Curated by Siddon's long term collaborator, Emilia Galatis.

This is the artist's first major solo in a public gallery in NSW, and will centre significant new sculptural installation, paintings, wallpaper and lightwork. The new commission works were created during and in response to the disastrous flooding in Fitzroy Crossing in 2023 that affected the artist and his community.

Born in 1964 in Derby, WA, John Prince Siddon spent his early years working on cattle stations until he was injured in a horse riding accident. Since 2009, he has been painting at Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency in Fitzroy Crossing WA, and has achieved major artistic accolades in recent years. He is a regular Finalist in Telstra NATSIAA and was Highly Commended in the King Wood and Mallesons Art Prize in 2018.

In February 2020, his first major solo *All Mixed Up* was commissioned by the Perth International Festival and curated by Emilia Galatis. It was named "the festival standout exhibition" by SMH Art Critic John McDonald and was later restaged in Tarnanthi, AGSA, in 2021.

Continually exploring new mediums and ways of working, Siddon's paintings and sculptural objects are often presented as immersive installations, featuring striking wallpapers. The symbolism and imagery in his works are inspired by contemporary life and are presented in a narrative style that stems from the traditional Kimberley craft of boab nut carving. Siddon draws confronting imagery, representing national and global issues that he sees on television and combines with his own story, desert iconography and the Narrangkarni (Dreamtime).

This major new commission at Cement Fondu offers Siddon the opportunity to create his largest ever installation to date, which will feature painted and embellished water barrels, his first foray into light and sound work, and an ambitious expansion of his signature painting style that mixes traditional and unconventional materials.

John Prince Siddon has been a finalist in the Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2023), The Fisher's Ghost Art Award (2022) and the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) at the Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory (2021, 2020, 2019, 2018). He was also a featured artist at the Tarnanthi 2021 festival at the Art Gallery of South Australia. His solo exhibition 'All Mixed Up' at the Fremantle Arts Centre, presented in conjunction with the Perth Festival 2020, was heralded as the 'stand-out exhibition' of the festival by John McDonald of the Sydney Morning Herald. In 2022, the Art Gallery of New South Wales commissioned paintings from Prince for the opening of the Sydney Modern Project exhibition 'Dreamhome: Stories of Art and Shelter'. In March 2024, he will have a major exhibition with Cement Fondu, 'Disco Dreamtime Drums'. His works are included in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia and Artbank.





That old fella don't know how to use the satellite.

Didn't know much about it.

Never seen a UFO or alien.

But he seen something going past.

He saw that comet coming (Halley's Comet).

Some old people thought it was the end of the world.

It scared them.

These days we got satellite to track anybody.

Satellite to track our fish, stealing fish from our sea.

They are like the spider web, the connection between satellites.

The blue stuff is telling people, tracking people where they are these days.

Tracking anybody.

Wish that old fella woulda been alive to tell 'em 'That Halley's Comet'.

Old people passed away not knowing what was that light.







Spider wow are danger.
The bite can put you in hospital, but if you leave them alone in peace, you'll be fine.
What amaze me is the webs.
The patterns when they do webs.

Look carefully close up, see what I mean.

Most webs are different shape, some large, some small, but the pattern they make, wow, it will blow you away.

I know the webs use for trap small flying insect.

To my mind I see it, great pattern arts.

Webs done by a deadly insect, the spider.

What made me do this painting of animals and insects weaving together patterns? My answer is the weaving women do, making basket made of long, fine, soft grass. Remind me of fine web art when spider do webs spinning. The first painting is a moth weaving a fish out of string of soft grass. The second is wallabies weaving a basket also made of soft grass. Last one is the butterfly & ladybug and also a spider weaving a large kangaroo which got trap in a spinning web. Many patterns you'll find in bush like spider webs. Also wallabies make tracks with his or her paws, tails and hands. Make pattern in the sand. The bugs and butterfly make weaves and flower pretty because the colour match. Our people, our great great grandma do weaving too. Women need to find wet tree branch to get soft grass, then dry it out in the sun. Don't know much about women doing weaving, it's a secret they kept.

Web Art acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm

Commissioned by Art Gallery of New South Wales

There's a spider in our toilet seat.
Help you hear tourist yelling.
They head off, yeah.
They deadly, yeah.
But look at the bright side.
These god deadly insect.



Will the Lion Still Be King? acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$8,900

Commissioned by Art Gallery of New South Wales

Will our world still be the same? Will our home be standing? Will our future be strong? Will our dream come true? Will virus stop?

Will our Prime Minister change the world instead of fighting each other for seat? Will our climate change around the world?

I mean, look at our king of the jungle. Africa, will the lion still be king.

Will our Aussie big red kangaroo ever hop again?

Will our deadly big shark still rule under the sea?

Will the Aussie red back spider make a good tunnel web pattern?

Will there be no more boomerang for music?

Will I be the first Aboriginal Prime Minister because of climate change?



Russian Why Bomb Hospital Small Farms acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$8,900 Fisher's Ghost Art Award 2022, Finalist Campbelltown Arts Centre 29 October – 9 December 2022

Sir John Sulman Prize 2023, Finalist Art Gallery of New South Wales 6 May – 3 September 2023





*Marlu, Red Kangaroo* acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Many stories with Marlu.

We believe in our gods.

Many song about big red.

It's a secret song for men.

Everytime anyone paint, you see kangaroo there.



Marlu, Red Kangaroo acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm



Stole Beer acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

We like drinking beer after work.

Emu the best.

During flood, our small pub got rob.

Young kinds go out with stolen boat just to steal beer while flood going down.

It's sad.

Many time.

This been going on many time back then.



Bring Back Memories acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

I did mix it with bird, Agro.

Growing up, seeing the show on TV.

Where are they now?

Mix it up with all type of fish pattern.

The drum look good when I mix it.



Eating From Tree Vine acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Its a B tree. Rats King go out eating fruit at night. Some hang side to side in moonlight. Night King Rat.



Eating From Tree Vine acrylic on 44 gallon drums  $87.5 \times 58 \times 58$  cm



Pilhie Ghost
acrylic on 44 gallon drums
87.5 x 58 x 58 cm
\$7,990

Ghost pilhe, Min min Light, Coogood Man, call it what you like.

It's a voice calling from dark telling you not welcome.

"Bring my animals back to my country. Do no more damage, my country dying.

Also our animals, bring them back please."



Pilhie Ghost
acrylic on 44 gallon drums
87.5 x 58 x 58 cm
\$7,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024





Somewhere Over The Rainbow
acrylic on 44 gallon drums
87.5 x 58 x 58 cm
\$7,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Remind us some way yonder.

We heading back where yellow brick road is.

Same here, along the road we meet different pattern.

Dream me its like heading back yellow brick road over the rainbow.

Flying through the sky.

Milky Way.



Mix It With Pride
acrylic on 44 gallon drums
87.5 x 58 x 58 cm
\$7,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

I've mix it with pride.

How we live, we see and life we see every day.

Imagine we lost our hope, not helping these animals.

Sea creatures, what will happen next?

Will we see them again?



Mix It With Pride acrylic on 44 gallon drums 87.5 x 58 x 58 cm \$7,990 Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024



Installation Image acrylic on eight 44 gallon drums installation dimensions variable,  $87.5 \times 58 \times 58$  cm each









The work is about power; I can still hear women screaming.

Little kids crying, women ending up in hospital, they have no body to mind them while their mum is in hospital badly hurt.

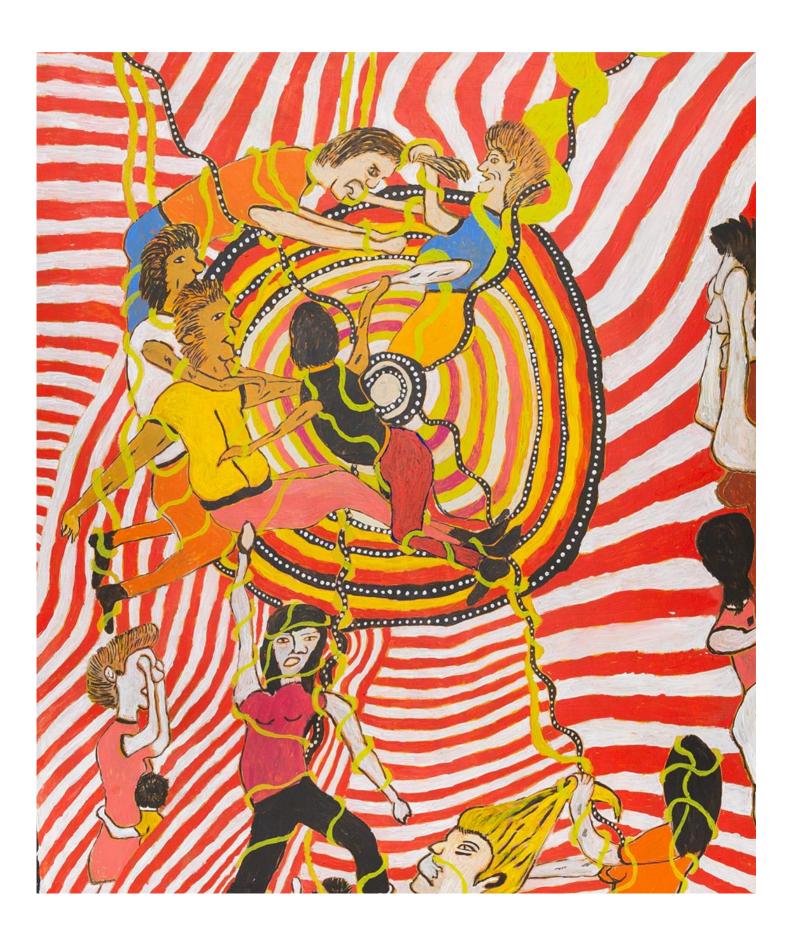
You see them on TV news, those one punch victims.

Ends up badly, one punch can kill you!

In this work John Prince Siddon airing his concerns around domestic violence and violence in Australia more widely.

This work is not related to any particular race, it's about people that fight using one punch.

In some ways it talks about the 'king hits' that we see on TV and in others it reflects on issues closer to home.









Pulkartu (Spider) acrylic on 3D print 50 x 50 x 18 cm \$5,500 Feed on prey passing beetles other spider when they outdoors toilets few people got bitten by this spider. You get a headache and cramps there is no need to panic only swelling but get treatment quick and fast.

Never use your hands when hiding something under a hole pipe that's where they hide.

The only thing I love about red backs is their webs just like art; the web pattern.

Purlkartu (Spider) is a brave foray into technologically assisted printmaking. His painted bull skull has been scanned, modelled and 3D printed with his original markings forming an embossed layer on the surface. Prince then finishes the sculpture with acrylic paint retracing some of his marks and inventing others. By embracing futuristic technology Prince challenges traditional notions of Indigenous painting.











Feeding Time

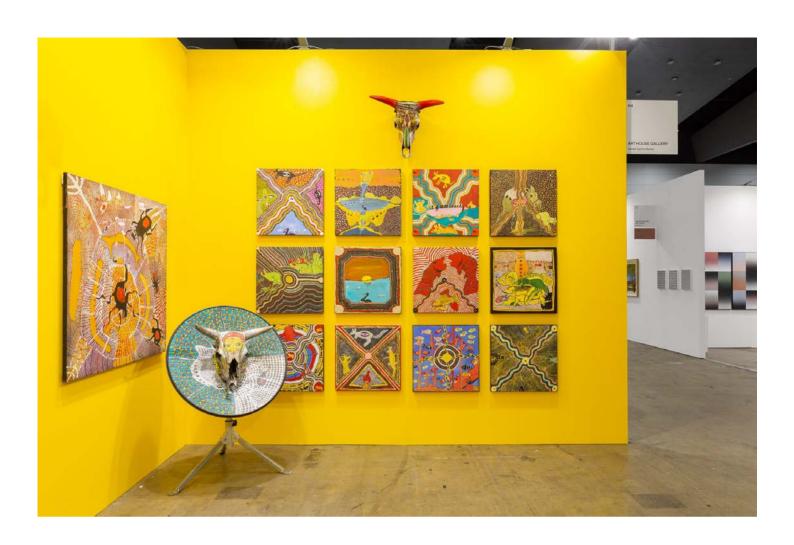
175 x 82 cm \$5,500





Dingo

184 x 93 cm \$5,500





"Caught in a trap" – Suspicious Minds by Elvis Presley



Butterfly Dance acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Green locust painting the butterfly through dance.

Butterfly Dance.

Snake, Goanna, Goat, Swan, Duck and Spider all helping to paint.

"This way, this way".

Pattern in the paint gone everywhere, paint on their body, clay painting, mud painting.

The waterholes where they dance.



Save our Barrier Reef
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm
\$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Barrier Reef, Nemo (hiding).
Ship went down, Captain Cook, it's a reef.
Some octopus trying to tell the Prime Minister "Save our Reef"
"Come down in scuba and see it".
See what's down there.
Not enough fish will be there in the future.



Easy Peaceful Evening acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Swan taking kids out of an evening.

Quiet pond, Perth.

Sunset, moon during the night.

Nice and peaceful – no humbug.



Save Our Country
acrylic on canvas  $60 \times 60 \text{ cm}$ \$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

An old fella.
From the hard story.
His Country is waterfall Country.
All the wild cattle and wild horses are destroying the waterhole.
Animals and birds come to drink there.
Wild donkeys.
He's trying to save his Country before he goes.
Protect it.



Darkest Day acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 cm

Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Floodtimes.

Dogs during flood, some of the dogs stayed until the flood went down.

Went to get them back.

Some dogs had babies, swim with their babies to the boat.

They alright, happy again "Why did you leave me?"

Bring 4 boats, 1 boat for animals.

Dog at the top with emotional scar, trapped during flood.



Gold Rush
acrylic on canvas  $60 \times 60 \text{ cm}$ \$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Mule, cowboy fallen off.
Looking for gold.
Fella got lost.
Forgot to find waterhole.
Mule smell the water.
Taking the mule the other way – didn't listen to the mule.
He died and the mule got saved.
Desert rose on his grave.
Swagman came along, stole the gold.



Our Ancestor
acrylic on canvas
59 x 59 cm
\$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Two Kangaroos weaving, even the joey helps.

Weaving the white Kangaroo on top.

White Kangaroo becoming red.

Marloo Land, Red Kangaroo.

Weaving is all the cultural parts of the story.

Bird doing his own weaving.



Saving our Forest
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm
\$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Parakeet weaving with their beak and doing stories.

Take a break — enjoy a can emu beer.

For fire or flood they warn other animals to get moving.

Get up in the morning and do more weaving with a bad hangover.



We All Own the Land
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm
\$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Spiders helping out weaving, green locusts, all next-door neighbours, same Country.

We have a different way of weaving.

Big collaborative canvas.

Spider wants all the land.

Moth, Spider, Locust.



Under the Sea is my Home acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 cm \$2,990 Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Octopus doing a weaving. Trying to tell Peter Dutton to dive and see what is going on. Frog and Lizard on mainland weaving and telling story. Same stories.

Some in land some under the sea.



Sky God
acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm
\$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Smaller animals are the babies, carrying babies from the sky.

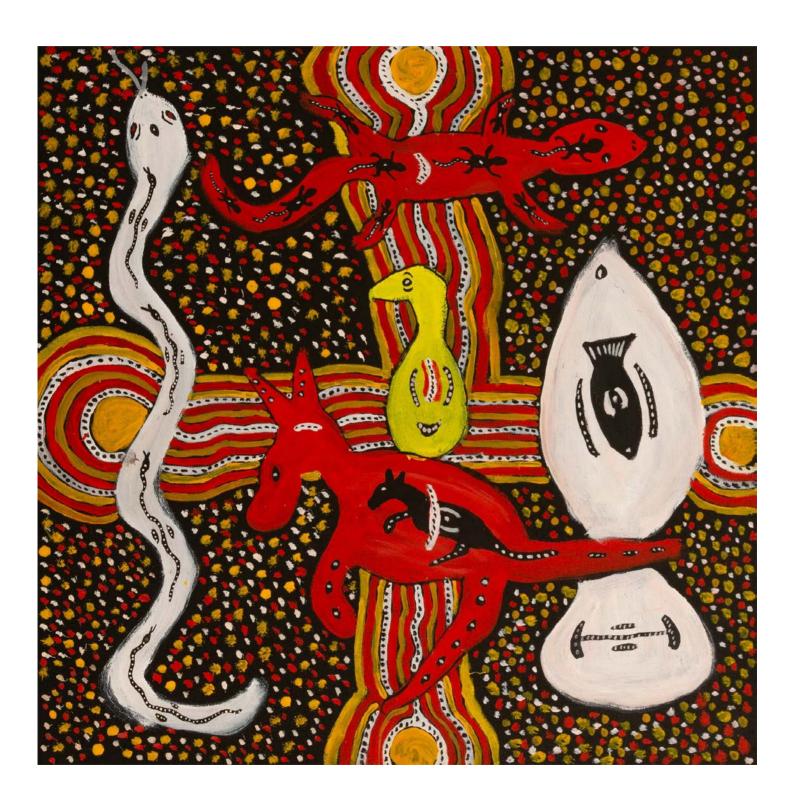
Offering the sky a sacrifice.

Traditional Walmajarri, sometimes.

Sometimes they still offer the sky.

Some from water some from land.

Night sky.



This is my Land
acrylic on canvas  $60 \times 60 \text{ cm}$ \$2,990
Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Animals of the land jigsaw.

Different parts of the land where all the animals come from.

The animals say "My place, my land".

Mob water, if you want to drink you can ask me.

Coffee/Tea.



Love Story acrylic on canvas 60 x 60 cm

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Commissioned by Cement Fondu, 2024

Frog doing painting, turtle and dog.
They are doing different styles of painting and singing.
Singing the swan, having a lovely evening.
A love song.
Swan don't mind their singing.
Frog doing a dance, ceremony.
Trying to impress the swan – even the turtle.



Numbat Night acrylic on canvas 120 x 150 cm \$8,600 Numbats are quiet animal.

I never seen one, but I did it for their good colour.

They feed on termite and ants.

They same like my cat, they quiet.

They come out at night where they like eating at night.

Search for them in the morning but can't find it.

They shy.

Next time I use a torch at night to see.



This Is How They Hunt Us acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$7,500 Sometimes they trap us, sometimes they use spear, net, fishing rod.

Just because we barramundi.

White ones (circles) – We lay eggs to breed more. Red (circles) – That's how they trap us.



Took Our Children Away acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$7,500 Part of the song from Archie Roach, you know the rest.

She feeling sad, won't have no more babies.

She is keeping the coolamon for memories of when they took the child away.

The red (circles) represents the government, police and welfare coming to take people away.



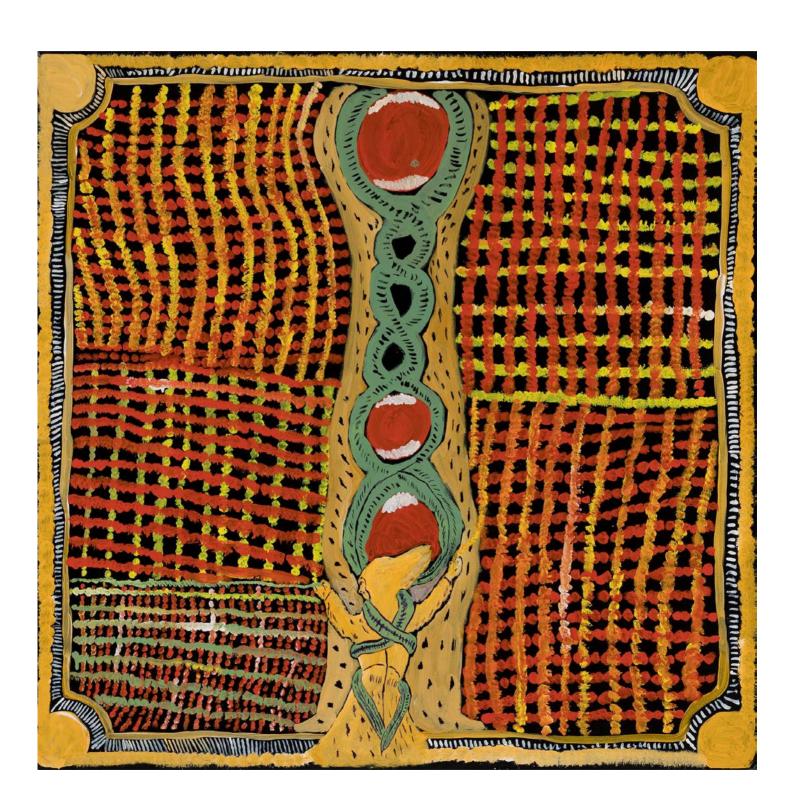


Weaving acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$7,500 Many women do weaving, you see the patterns.

Go this way, that way.

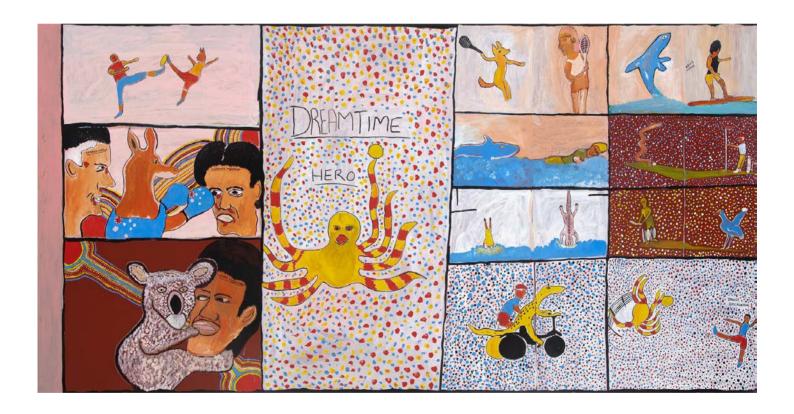
Its same like a spider doing his web.

Good pattern web and good weaving are the same.





Few Of Our Aussie Stars Can Be Like Our Animals acrylic on canvas 120 x 240 cm \$15,000



Hide The Young acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$7,500 Fish and kangaroo, bird and turtle, they all like the vine.

They search for food, lay their egg.

Gotta find a good spot to lay them, have their young animal.

Sometime fish find the lily pad to hide his eggs.

Even the turtle.

The bird will hide it near the billabong.

Kangaroo will hide it in its pouch.



Butterfly & Bee acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm \$7,500 They both working on the flower weaving.

They lay their eggs there, get food there.

They come from everywhere, come from different place to work on the flower.

They find other flowers in that different place, they do the same.

There is feed everywhere.



Climate Change Underwater acrylic on canvas 120 x 120 cm Jellyfish and octopus, they're having a big meeting under the sea with all the fish.

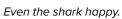
"We're gonna fight for this reef, get it back alive.

Government won't help, shark won't help.

Government likes shark.

We gonna fight with all animals on mainland to keep our reef alive from climate change."







# JOHN PRINCE SIDDON

Born 1964, Derby, Western Australia

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2023	Sulman Art Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, NSW, Finalist
	Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art, Barn Gallery, Montsalvat, VIC, Acquired
2022	The Fisher's Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre, NSW, Finalist
2021	Fremantle Print Award, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA, Finalist
	Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Finalist
2019	Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Finalist
2018	Port Hedland Art Prize, The Courthouse Gallery, Port Hedland, WA, Finalist
	King & Wood Mallesons First Nations Art Award, NSW Parliament Fountain Court, Sydney, Highly Commended
	Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Finalist

Western Australia Indigenous Art Award, Art Gallery of Western Australia, WA, Finalist

# SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015

2023	Melbourne Art Fair, Arthouse Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2022	'My Painting is My Voice', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2020	'All Mixed-Up', Fremantle Art Centre, WA
	'Hatching Time', Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, VIC
2018	'Hunting Season', Chapman and Bailey, Melbourne, VIC

#### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2023	'Dreamhome, Stories of Art and Shelter', Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW 'Shadow Spirit', Rising, Flinders Street Station, Melbourne, VIC
	'Be Brave, Make Change', Artbank, Sydney, NSW
	'Summer', Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2021	'Remember Them', Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2020	Sydney Contemporary, Sydney Contemporary Presents, Sydney, NSW
	Creative Growth Artists, Outside Art Fair, New York City, USA
2019	Meeting Places Mangkaja and Creative Growth, Oakland, California, USA
	'Parranga - Hot Dry Season', Outstation Gallery, Darwin, NT
2019	'Unbranded', La Trobe Institute, Bendigo, VIC
	'Desert River Sea, Portraits of the Kimberley', Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA
2017	'When the Sky Fell', Perth International Arts Festival, Perth, WA
	Bunbury Biennale, Bunbury, WA
	'Sharks and Shamans', PS Art Space Gallery, Perth, WA
2016	'Revealed', Short St Gallery, Broome, WA

### **COLLABORATIONS**

2015

2023	National Gallery, Volleys and John Prince Siddon
2022	Poppy Lissiman and John Prince Siddon, Luxury handbags and goods
2020	John Prince Siddon and Emma Buswell, Knitwear, 2020
2015	Australian Print Workshop, Melbourne, VIC

'New Frontiers', Linden Art Gallery, Melbourne, VIC

# **SELECTED COLLECTIONS**

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Bank, Nillumbik Council Art Collection.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

John McDonald, 'Inflatable animals and plastic poo? Our verdict on the MCA's futuristic reboot', Sydney Morning Herald, Aug 2022 John McDonald, 'No boundaries': John Prince Siddon brings an original dynamic to Indigenous art', Sydney Morning Herald, Nov 2020 Barnaby Smith, 'Prince and the Revolution', Art Guide, Feb 2020

John McDonald, 'John Prince Siddon: eclectic, gothic and psychedelic', Sydney Morning Herald, Feb 2020 Will Yeoman, 'Enriching our lives through art', The West Australian, April 2020

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