

# HERMANNSBURG POTTERS

*Rehla Kurrka*





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## *Relha Kurrka*

Hermannsburg Potters present *Relha Kurrka*, an exhibition of new ceramic works celebrating the people who shape, sustain, and inspire community, culture, and creativity in Ntaria.

In Western Aranda, the word *relha* directly translates to “person,” but it holds deeper meaning — often referring specifically to First Nations people. In this context, *Relha kurrka* carries layered significance: not only are these literal ceramic figures, but they also represent First Nations individuals who hold meaning, memory, and cultural power for the artists and their communities.

In 2024, artist Billy Bain travelled to Ntaria (Hermannsburg) to lead clay workshops with local men, supported by Hermannsburg Potters and Men’s Program worker Abel Pareroutja. A Dharug man from Sydney, Bain’s practice explores the complexities of Aboriginal identity in contemporary Australia, often with sharp humour and political edge. In Ntaria, he invited men of all ages to sculpt someone who had influenced their lives — from grandfathers and cultural leaders to Ned Kelly and Richard Bell.

The workshops were more than a technical training. Abel helped bring the group together and took Bain out on Country to Pmurlangkinya (Palm Valley), where they cooked up some roo tail and spent time around the fire — a moment of cultural sharing and connection. In these spaces, Bain and the Hermannsburg fellas found common ground — different histories and experiences, but a shared sense of identity, responsibility and survival as *relha*: First Nations men connected through culture, story and place.

This exhibition presents the sculptural works made during and after those workshops — figures full of personality, memory and power. In response, the women of Hermannsburg Potters have created their own versions of *relha* (people): depicted on their signature hand-coiled pots topped with sculptural lids, each a tribute to those who inspire and sustain their vibrant community.

Together, these works celebrate the legacy and future of one of Central Australia’s most iconic art movements — where clay becomes a medium for storytelling, resistance, connection, and pride.





**ABEL PAREOULTJA**

*My Brother*

terracotta and underglazes

36.5 x 29.5 x 22 cm

\$2,200

*Abel made this guy, that's his brother who used to work at Ntaria School. He was a footy player before, playing for Western Aranda Bulldogs our community team, so Abel made him.*







**SAMMY UNGWANAKA**

*Buddy Franklin*

terracotta and underglazes

34.5 x 14.5 x 12.5 cm

\$1,950



*This guy was Buddy Franklin, he used to play, Aboriginal fella, tall.  
When he was one that team, Swans, he was good player. Scored  
every goal, he was the best.*



**SAMMY UNGWANAKA**

*Isaac Heeney*

terracotta and underglazes

37.5 x 14.5 x 12.5 cm

\$1,950



*I'm doing my favourite team, I go for Swans. I like the colours red and white. This is number 5, Isaac Heeney.*



**SAMMY UNGWANAKA**

*Buddy Franklin*

terracotta and underglazes

34.5 x 14.5 x 12.5 cm

\$1,950



**SAMMY UNGWANAKA**

*Isaac Heeney*

terracotta and underglazes

37.5 x 14.5 x 12.5 cm

\$1,950





**SAMMY UNGWANAKA**

Cowboy Woody

terracotta and underglazes

24 x 27 x 10.5 cm

\$1,950



*He's from the movie Toy Story, Cowboy Woody. That's the best movie, I was watching from when I was a school age boy. Back in the days we used to have cowboys here in Ntaria, at Kuprilya Day time they used to dress up like cowboys with all the clothes and boots. Some of them used to be working as stockman, and sometimes they were just riding for Kuprilya Day Races. They used to race in and race back, from Ntaria to Kurpilya Springs.*



**THOMAS FISHOOK & KRISTOFF RATARA**

*Hitchhiking Man*

terracotta and underglazes

40.5 x 18.5 x 13 cm

\$2,000



*Hitchhiking man is my Grandfather.  
Every pension week tried to get  
a lift to town (Mparntwe/Alice  
Springs) from Ntaria  
(Hermannsburg)  
by hitchhiking. He was trying to go  
to town to watch footy on the  
weekend. He would walk up to the  
three ways, on the highway there,  
and hitchhike for the weekend. And  
from Alice Springs, on Sunday  
he always hitch hike back to Ntaria  
from marble stone (Flynn's Grave  
site). He's wearing his Bombers  
jersey, that's his AFL team.*





Photography by Billy Bain

**ABEL PAREROULTJA**

*Irrkuntja/Police*

terracotta and underglazes

38 x 22.5 x 12 cm

\$2,500

*The Irrkuntja he was that local policeman that's out here in Ntaria.  
He always say hello to me when he's driving past to shops. He was  
just a little young fella, learning to be talking Aranda.*





**DAVE PATRICK**

*Ned Kelly*

terracotta and underglazes

34 x 18 x 15.5

\$1,950



*There he is, Ned Kelly, that's him with gun. Dave made this in the workshop with Billy. Ned Kelly, I think that's his favourite little character, from the movies and legends.*



**ABEL PAREROULTJA**

*Irrkuntja/Police*

terracotta and underglazes

38 x 22.5 x 12 cm

\$2,500



**DAVE PATRICK**

*Ned Kelly*

terracotta and underglazes

34 x 18 x 15.5

\$1,950





**KRISTOFF RATARA**

*Richard Bell*

terracotta and underglazes

37 x 27 x 14 cm

\$2,000



*This is Richard Bell, he's artist from Brisbane. He's Aboriginal. I wanted make him because he's famous painter and artist. I saw him on the television and on Youtube. I saw video of him painting, landscape. He travels around and his artwork is telling stories and fighting for our people.*











Photography by Rachel Farag





**JUDITH PUNGARTA INKAMALA**

*Kwatja Walhama (Swimming in the Water)*

terracotta and underglazes

17 x 12 x 12 cm

\$1,850



*Kwatja walhama, swimming in the water, they went out for picnic and take kids and family for swimming. Wumpia time (hot time). They are other side from Ellery Creek, near Laaparrapuntja homeland. On the lid is a Grandmother and Granddaughter. My Aunty Elaine Sharp and her Granddaughter. They been stay at Laaparrapuntja long time before it was a homeland. They used to work there at Laaparrapuntja, in the yard helping with horses. Husband of Mrs Sharp also work in there. They get water from wells sometimes, to make marna (food). When I was little girl I went there to Ellery other side to meet them for picnic. I'm on there somewhere, little girl swimming.*



**SHIRLEY WHEELER**

*School Camp at Lilla*

terracotta and underglazes

19 x 11.5 x 11.5 cm

\$980

*That's the bush and kids going camping. The school bus for the kids from families long time ago was camping at Lilla (Shirley's family outstation near Kings Canyon). The kids they're walpala (white people) and relha (first nations). They travel from town, Alice Springs out to bush for camp. At camp they learn about bush tucker and look around.*





**JOSIE FLY**

*Camping at Karnta-time (cold time)*

terracotta and underglazes

31.5 x 28 x 28 cm (without top)

\$3,950



We used to go from Tjamungurra camping with Uncle Jo Kukla and Aunty Erna Motna during the winter season. Uncle Jo was my Dad's cousin and he was a white Germans Man. He was married to my Aunty Erna, who was Pastor Cyril Motna's Daughter. Erna and my Mum, they married up two cousins. Mum and Erna used to collect wood for fire. Me and Ngala, my cousin, as kids used to play around and help them collect wood. Winter time is when you see perentie and kangaroo. And we used to make a lot of fire to keep us warm. It was fun going camping at winter. They used to collect branches to make windbreak. They used to collect branches, cut it with a little axe. They put the big branch into the ground then use the leafy branch on the side to make like a wall. So the wind don't come when we camp. It was good, when they got all the branch and the leaf. We used to use that in the olden time in the humpies as well.







**DAWN NGALA WHEELER**

*My Family at Lilla*

terracotta and underglazes

19 x 14.5 x 14.5 cm

\$1,250

*This is at Lilla, my family Outstation. near Kings Canyon. My father was making boomerang. My mother making music stick. And my Granddaughter was making a painting. We was staying at tin house at Lilla Outstation. My Father and family and me, we was sitting there.*





**DAWN NGALA WHEELER**

*Ntaria Sports Weekend*  
terracotta and underglazes  
25 x 15.5 x 15.5 cm  
\$1,950

*This is at the oval, here, in Ntaria. They're playing football for Sports Weekend. Western Aranda Bulldogs are playing another community team. All Ntaria people are there watching, some of them in their cars. There's bus selling ice cream. Kids buying from the bus, eating ice cream.*



**DAWN NGALA WHEELER**

*Albert Namatjira Painting*  
terracotta and underglazes  
24.5 x 15 x 15 cm  
\$1,950

*That's Albert Namatjira, he was making a painting. He's sitting down  
at his house, the white house, Namatjira's house. He's looking at  
Mount Sonder and sitting down making a painting. I put the  
vegetable, from his garden.*







**DONNA PURRULA MCNAMARA**

*Grandmother Teaching Us*

terracotta and underglazes

33 x 23 x 24 cm

\$4,750

*Before we went to our Country, it was nice and quiet. Nothing to worry about. We used to go swimming, hunting, looking for Witchetty Grubs, tjaapa. Most of all our grandmother told us story on the ground, how to find which track for animals, which track for human, people. And our grandfather and Dad used to cook kangaroo tails. We used to go in our old truck, camping. We seen lots of birds, animals, nice wildlife, and plants. And nice small grass, before the buffel grass (buffel grass is now classified as a weed in the Northern Territory). And before knowing the mobile phone we used to enjoy the bush life.*





**DONNA PURRULA MCNAMARA**

*Mamama. That Means Special Granma*

terracotta and underglazes

21 x 14.5 x 14.5 cm

\$1,900



*My Grandmother is a strong old lady. She used to take us bush  
looking through sand for goannas, and looking for bush medicine.  
She taught us how to find which plant we can use and not use. She  
was important to us and our teacher. But now, these days we can't  
find anything.*





**DAWN NGALA WHEELER**

*Down the Creek We Was Riding*

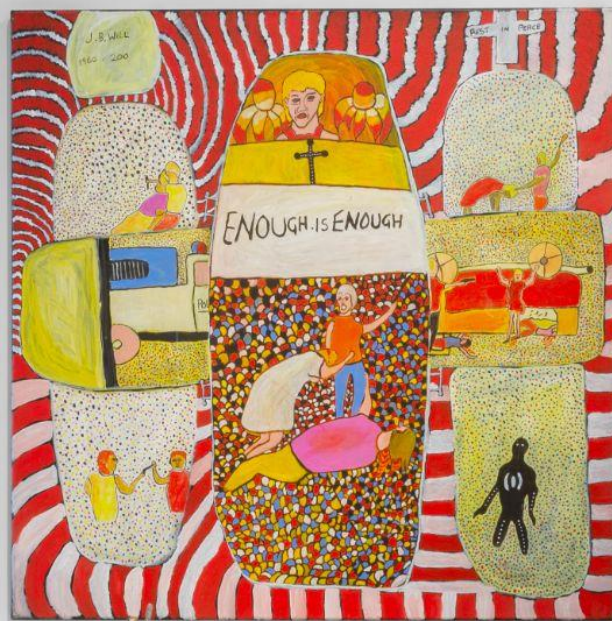
terracotta and underglazes

29.5 x 16.5 x 16.5 cm

\$2,200

*This one is Iyaartinya pa imanka, now and then. Imanka inthurra, long time ago, when I was a little girl I was riding camel down the creek, me and my friend. We was riding to concert up at Palm Valley. When I was young girl was riding camel and horse. We stayed down the creek long time, with my father and mother and me and the other kids we was staying at the creek. Down close to Lhara Pinta (Finke River). Family group used to stay next to the water. I remember long time ago. Now little boys, my grandsons Anthony and Dinesh, ride horse down that same creek. That's my Grandson Dinesh riding horse on the lid. Now we staying at house up at Sandhill.*





**ANITA MBITJANA RATARA**

*Nanda (Horse)*

terracotta and underglazes

20 x 11.5 x 11.5 cm

\$980

*All around Ntaria (Hermannsburg) are lots of wild horses! When I was young girl I had horse of my own, palamino, yellow one. That's me riding with my friends, when we were young.*







**ALIZHA PANANGKA COULTHARD**

*Remote School Softball*

terracotta and underglazes

33.5 x 16 x 16 cm

\$1,950



*This pot its about me when I was going to school in remote school at Red Sandhill Outstation. There was church there. When I was baby I was baptised here at the church near the school. It's still standing there today. There the teachers. My Aunty was a teacher, and my cousin. And the other students was from Hermannsburg School. They came from Ntaria School to play softball with us. We had red white and blue, that was our team colour. Then after playing we went in big trip to Nhulunbuy (North-East Arnhem Land). Ntaria students and Red Sandhill students travelled together to compete with the other teams there. When we went to Nhulunbuy it was very challenging, the other teams were very good, but we were good too. It was my first time to see the sea. I brought some shells back to show my Mum. We had lots of fun at Nhulunbuy. Made lots of new friends when we was there. We drove from Hermannsburg on a bus.*









66 McLachlan Avenue  
Rushcutters Bay NSW 2011  
+61 2 9332 1019  
[contact@arthousegallery.com.au](mailto:contact@arthousegallery.com.au)  
[www.arthousegallery.com.au](http://www.arthousegallery.com.au)

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