

Yams Aren't Scarce

aboriginalartdirectory.com/yams-arent-scarce/



The Kokatha and Nukunu artist Yhonnie Scarce is presenting a major solo show at the Art Gallery of WA, *Yhonnie Scarce: The Light of Day* from today.

Through the media of glass and photography she throws light on Britain's nuclear testing within the Woomera Prohibited Area in South Australia, referencing the ongoing impact of the removal and relocation of Aboriginal people from their homelands that followed. Family history is central to Scarce's work; the artist also revealing stories involving the indentured labour her family members experienced.

The exhibition critically addresses the ongoing consequences of the forced removal and relocation of Aboriginal communities from their ancestral lands.

Her aesthetic effect is achieved through mixed media, most famously via her iconic glass yams suspended like great chandeliers within the gallery area – accentuating the craftsmanship and visual allure of the glass medium.

Yams are definitely flavour of the year in 2024. For, of course, Emily Kame Kngwarreye's solo show in Canberra features those totemic vegetables that gave her the name, Kame. And there are 2000 blown yams in Scarce's *Thunder Raining Poison*. Yams created with her own breath. For the Breakdown nuclear test turned sand to glass! So Scarce went to Birmingham University to pursue the origins of the fusion that melted the surface of her ancestors' Country into glass. It was at that uni that Otto Frisch and Rudolph Peiris calculated that a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction would make an effective bomb.

Another aspect of Scarce's researches was a tour of the world's great memorials – from Berlin to Wounded Knee – commenting that we avoid even mentioning our massacres and memorialising them in Australia

In a world where the threat of global nuclear conflict still looms, *'Yhonnie Scarce: The Light of Day'* serves as a timely reminder of the importance of acknowledging and learning from our past mistakes. By recalling our history, we can try to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future.

And then, through archival imagery from her photography collection, Scarce illuminates the shared histories of forced labour and the enduring trauma experienced by communities throughout the world.

Scarce's professional profile has risen exponentially in recent years. In 2023, her work was exhibited in *The Armory Show, New York*, and in 2022 at both *IKON Gallery Birmingham* and *Palais de Tokyo, Paris*. *Remember Royalty (2018)* was exhibited in *A Year In Art: Australia 1992* at the Tate, London and *Missile Park (2021)* seen at Gropius Bau Berlin. Scarce has also held major solo exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and the Institute of Modern Art in Australia. She was selected for the 3rd NGA Quinquennial Exhibition.

The Art Gallery of WA exhibition runs from 2 February to 19 May 2024 as part of the Perth Festival, which is being held from 9 February – 3 March 2024. Additionally, Yhonnie Scarce will give an Artist Talk on Friday 2 February and attend the panel discussion on Saturday 3 February.

Also significant in Perth is the 30th anniversary of the commercial gallery, Mossenson.

Thirty years of supporting artists Australia wide and close to five hundred exhibitions are distilled into the works on paper of some thirty leading artists in an exhibition simply called *THIRTY*. Artists included are Brian Robinson, Betty Bundamurra, Kitty Malarvie, Ben Ward, Ngarra, Omborin, Sandra Hill and Shane Pickett.

Mossenson Galleries was established by Diane and Dan Mossenson with the aim of raising the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. With the passage of time the operation expanded with branches in Fremantle, Carlton and Collingwood and the representation of some hand picked non-Indigenous artists.

THIRTY runs until 17 February.

Url: <https://artgallery.wa.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/yhonnie-scarce-the-light-of-day>

Artist: Yhonnie Scarce, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Brian Robinson, Betty Bundamurra, Kitty Malarvie, Ben Ward, Ngarra, Omborin, Sandra Hill, Shane Pickett,

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Gallery: Art Gallery of WA ,