
TREVOR 'TURBO' BROWN was a Latje Latje man who was born in 1967 and grew up in Mildura, a regional city in North Western Victoria. Born with an intellectual disability and abandoned by his family at a young age, he spent much of his youth homeless.

By 1982, Turbo was slipping into alcohol abuse and crime when a local policeman introduced him to Uncle Herb Batten and his wife, Aunty Bunta. They adopted Turbo and moved to Melbourne where he took up boxing and became a keen rapper and breakdancer. His nickname 'Turbo' began at this time and is the name of a lead character in the breakdancing film 'Breakin' (1984).

In 2001, Uncle Herb and Aunty Bunta enrolled in a diploma of visual arts at the Bundoora RMIT campus and took Turbo along. It was clear from early on that Turbo had an exceptional talent for being able to express on canvas the stories and images in his mind. In just a few years, Aunty Bunta and Uncle Herb could see that art had transformed Turbo's life.

Turbo painted animals because, as he told Uncle Herb, when he was a teenager living on the Mildura streets and the Murray River bank, the animals were his only friends. Turbo's work may seem naive in the simplicity of form, but there is an incredible energy in the dynamic composition, colour and line. Using bright colours and bold outlines, he usually worked on a large scale and painted quickly using un-mixed acrylic paint. His engaging pictorial style and distinctive creatures from the dreamtime made his works pulsate with an irresistible and syncopated beat.

By 2005 Turbo already had his first solo exhibition in Melbourne, a sell-out, completed a Diploma of Visual Arts at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and was a finalist in Australia's biggest Indigenous art prize, the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Award. Building on that, Turbo achieved substantial recognition for his bold and innovative style and carved out a significant exhibition history. He was a finalist in the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Award three times and was also the recipient of the Deadly Award, Victoria's highest honour for an Indigenous artist, at the 2012 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards.

In 2006, Turbo was included in 'Landmarks' - an exhibition curated by Judith Ryan and Stephen Gilchrist - at the National Gallery of Victoria. Judith Ryan, senior curator of Indigenous Art, commented at the time that he produces work "of energy and integrity that is strongly expressive of his cultural identity".

In 2007, Turbo was part of 'Culture Warriors' the inaugural National Indigenous Art Triennial curated by Brenda Croft. He also exhibited at the prestigious Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London and was included in 'Gori-lla', a show of approximately 90 Indigenous Australian artists in Italy.

Turbo passed away suddenly in early 2017, aged just 49.

AWARDS

- 2016 Cossack Art Awards - Highly Commended
- 2015 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards - Finalist
- 2013 One of three artists selected for mural Brunswick Kind in Sparta Place, Brunswick VIC
- 2012 Victorian Indigenous Art Awards - Winner
- 2010 Trevor Turbo featured in Essentials Magazine, Spring-Summer 2010
- 2008 25th NATSIAA, Darwin - Finalist
- 2006 23th NATSIAA, Darwin - Finalist
- 2005 22th NATSIAA, Darwin - Finalist
- 2004 City of Darebin DATSIC Award Gumbri Exhibition, Bundoora Homestead
- 2004 City of Darebin DATSIC Award Gumbri Exhibition Bundoora Homestead

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 Trevor Turbo Brown, deadly depictions of the dreamtime, Kate Owen Gallery, Sydney
- 2013 Last Man Standing, Bunjilaka Cultural Centre, Victorian Museum, Melbourne
- 2012 Trevor Turbo Brown, New Works, Rex-Livingston Art Dealer, Sydney
- 2011 Turbo's Hungry Birds, ARTWORLD.tv Gallery, Melbourne
- 2011 Trevor Turbo Brown, New Works, Rex-Livingston Art Dealer, Sydney
- 2010 Trevor Turbo Brown, Dreamtime Animals, Boscia Galleries, Melbourne
- 2010 Trevor Turbo Brown, New Works, Rex-Livingston Art Dealer, Sydney
- 2009 Trevor Turbo Brown - Friends and Family, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London

- 2009 Trevor Turbo Brown, New Works, Rex-Livingston Art Dealer, Sydney
- 2008 Trevor Turbo Brown, New Works, Australia Dreaming Art, Melbourne
- 2008 Trevor Turbo Brown, Animals from the Dreamtime, Rex-Livingston Art Dealer, Sydney
- 2007 Trevor Turbo Brown, Animals from the Dreaming, Australia Dreaming Art, Melbourne
- 2006 Trevor Turbo Brown, Dreamtime Animals, Koorie Heritage Trust
- 2005 Trevor Turbo Brown, Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020 East Coast Matters, Kate Owen Gallery, Sydney
- 2020 Director's Choice 2020, Kate Owen Gallery, Sydney
- 2019 Songlines XXXI: Wing, Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London
- 2016 SOVEREIGNTY, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
- 2008 Culture Warriors: National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia Travelling Exhibition
- 2008 Better World Arts SA
- 2008 A Latje Latje Story: Locations and Longevity
- 2008 Who Let the Dogs Out, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery
- 2008 End of Year Mix #3, Australia Dreaming Art, Melbourne
- 2007 Naive, Australia Dreaming Art, Melbourne
- 2007 Culture Warriors: National Indigenous Art Triennial, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- 2007 End of Year Mix #2, Australia Dreaming Art, Melbourne
- 2006 Landmarks, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 2006 Tribal Expressions Commonwealth Showcase of Indigenous Art, Blackbox Gallery
- 2006 Indigenart, The Mossenson Galleries, Perth
- 2005 Urban Yarns: Southern Region Indigenous Arts
- 2005 Sorry Seems so Hard to say, Bundoora Homestead Art Gallery, City of Darebin
- 2004 Emerging Artists, Koorie Heritage Trust
- 2004 City of Darebin Acquisition Art prize
- 2004 Gumbri White Dove Indigenous Art Prize, Bundoora Homestead, City of Darebin Reconciliation
- 2004 Show Aboriginal Affairs Victoria Latrobe St Gallery, Urbanity Parliament House and Bunjilaka
- 2003 Us Mob Too, PIT Space Gallery, RMIT University
- 2003 Indigenous Awareness Week Show, Grand Hall, City of Whittlesea
- 2003 Bagunnga, 10 years of RMIT Koorie Ed, Koorie Heritage Trust
- 2003 NAIDOC Week Show (Group Show with NMIT) PIT Space
- 2003 Us Mob1, Dantes Upstairs Gallery, Fitzroy
- 2002 End of Year Show in conjunction with Northland Sec. College
- 2002 Arts Showcase PIT Space Gallery RMIT University
- 2001 End of Year Show PIT Space Gallery RMIT University

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