Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1200

Thancoupie

(1937 - 2011)

Nationality	American
Born	1 January, 1937, Napranum Queensland Australia
Died	31 December, 2011
Occupation	Artist, Teacher

Summary

Thancoupie was born at Napranum in Queensland, on the land traditionally occupied by her ancestors. Her father was killed in war. Thancoupie attended the local school before being sent to Brisbane to train as a preschool teacher. Upon her return to Napranum she established a preschool but was unhappy with the situation and resigned.

Thancoupie began writing down and illustrating (with paintings on bark) stories her grandmother had taught her, and had a number of exhibitions of her work. Her application to study at a Sydney art school was rejected because she lacked formal qualifications, however she came across a pottery school which accepted her as a student. Thancoupie then went to America and Mexico and worked with indigenous potters. This helped her develop her own style, and she has since been creating pots and tile murals at her studio in Cairns where she moved in 1976, after the Comalco mining company refused to allow her a house at Napranum because she had left the community. Thancoupie still visits her hometown on a regular basis.

Published resources

Book
Murawina : Australian women of high achievement, Roberta Sykes ; photography by Sandy Edwards, 1993

Thancoupie, the potter, Isaacs, Jennifer, 1982

Book Section
Thancoupie: earth shaper, Mellor, Doreen, 2001

I keep my head above my shoulders, and I try to keep him strong and high, Thancoupie and Ulli Beier, 1988

Edited Book
The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia : Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, society and culture, Horton, David, 1994

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Newspaper Article
Artist kept her people's culture and language alive, Nicholls, Christine, 2011

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