

# ROSELLA NAMOK

## *SURE LINES*

16 AUGUST - 9 NOVEMBER 2025



fireworksgallery

Text: Dr Sally Butler | Photography: Mick Richards

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Rosella Namok is represented by FireWorks Gallery, Brisbane

9/31 thompson street bowen hills qld 4006  
po box 2418 fortitude valley bc qld 4005  
tel 07 3216 1250  
[info@fireworksgallery.com.au](mailto:info@fireworksgallery.com.au)  
[www.fireworksgallery.com.au](http://www.fireworksgallery.com.au)



Front cover: *Old Gals Yarnin II* (detail) 2023, acrylic on canvas.

Back cover: *Old Gals Yarnin I* (detail) 2023, acrylic on canvas.

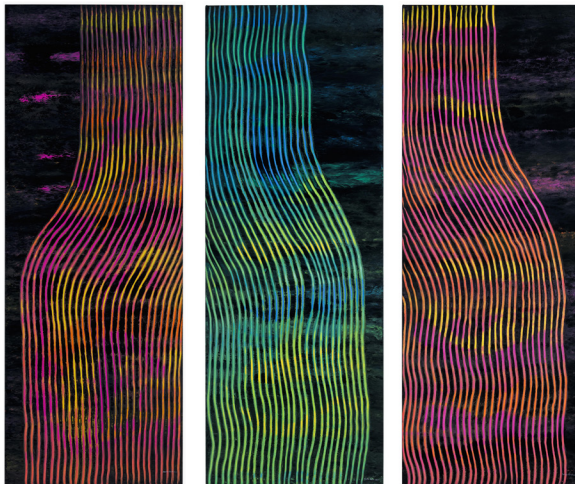
Both Rockhampton Museum of Art Collection. Winner of the Gold Award 2024. Gift of the Moya Gold Trust through Rockhampton Museum of Art Gift Fund 2024

**Rosella Namok – *Sure Lines*** showcases recent work related to the artist's 2024 winning entry for Rockhampton Museum of Art's Gold Award for outstanding contemporary Australian painting.

Rosella Namok (born 1979) is of Aangkum heritage from the tropical far north Queensland community of Lockhart River, and now lives and works predominantly in Cairns/Gimuy. With a career spanning three decades, Rosella's work is nationally and internationally recognised as a unique expression of contemporary Australian Aboriginal art and culture. Her work is also renowned for truly distinctive depictions of Australia's tropical north.

The exhibition title of *Sure Lines* signals literal and metaphoric lines underpinning her art. Sheeting monsoonal rains, moody horizons, and the quirky character of local flora in her art are conveyed through a fundamental linear geometry. These visible lines are emotionally amplified and socialised through suggestion of unseen lines of connection that bond the artist with her family, kinfolk and communities. Rosella's extraordinary talent as a tonal colourist completes the imagery and visual storytelling with depth, intimacy and a sense of timelessness, time passing, or time well spent. They are images that travel deeper into your psyche the longer you look.

Through her art, Rosella shares a composite image of her world today, and how that contemporary life resonates with cultural traditions of the past. The artist's lifetime of keen observation of how mood, character, and introspection are conveyed in the natural, social and spiritual worlds around us creates a very inclusive kind of art that appeals broadly across all age groups and cultural backgrounds.



*Old Gals Yarnin' I, II & III* 2023  
acrylic on canvas 225x290cm

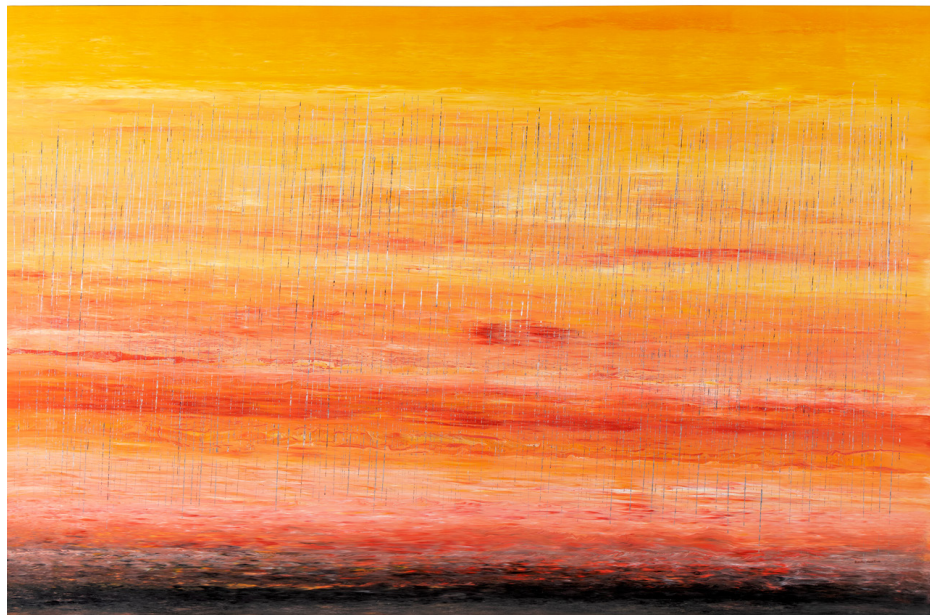


Rosella Namok is internationally acclaimed for highly individualistic depictions of her tropical coastal homeland and contemporary Aboriginal life. Growing up in Lockhart River (a 760 kilometre drive north from Cairns) instilled Aboriginal perspectives of how to understand and engage with one's natural, social and spiritual environments (collectively conceptualised in the Aboriginal term of 'Country'). Rosella commenced art training in her mid-teenage years through an inspired vocational education program offered at the community school. Learning diverse artistic methods, materials and techniques, taught by highly-skilled resident and visiting artists, helped Rosella synthesise her Aboriginal perspectives into a very personal style of painting, printmaking and sculpture.

Above: *Which Way?* 2021  
Overpage Top: Chalkos Foundary 2024  
Overpage Bottom: Brisbane Studio 2020







Rosella Namok is one of relatively few artists throughout history who depict the subject of rain itself. Rain is usually a background or a surrounding but seldom the focus of the image. In creating the paintings Rosella has developed a unique technique that she calls 'tapping the rain'. It requires considerable physical and mental concentration. The result is imagery that is all about how you feel and what you think about when surrounded by nothing but rain. A lifelong pastime of fishing helped her observe the language of clouds, waves, currents and rain in its many moods. Rain experienced during the monsoonal wet season across northern Australia is depicted in her art as an immense force impacting daily life, cultural activities and psychological moods. These rain paintings have won several national awards and are now one of Queensland's most distinctive contributions to Australian art history.

*Big Sunset Rain* 2019  
acrylic on canvas 200x300cm  
Collection of Susan Buckley & Darryl Dunk



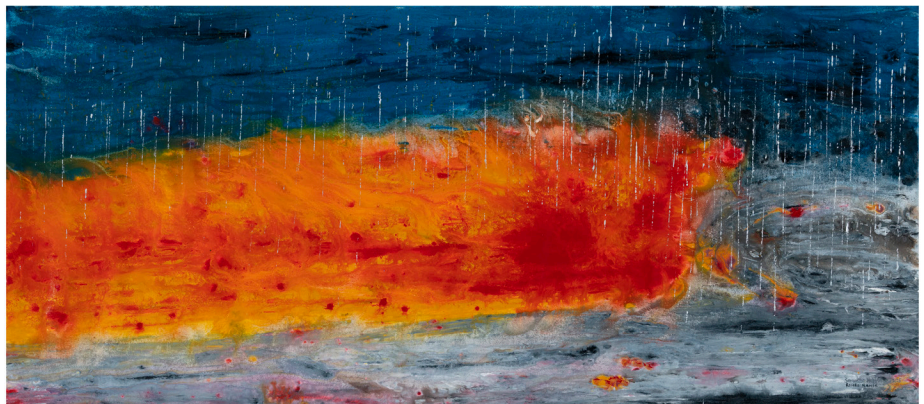
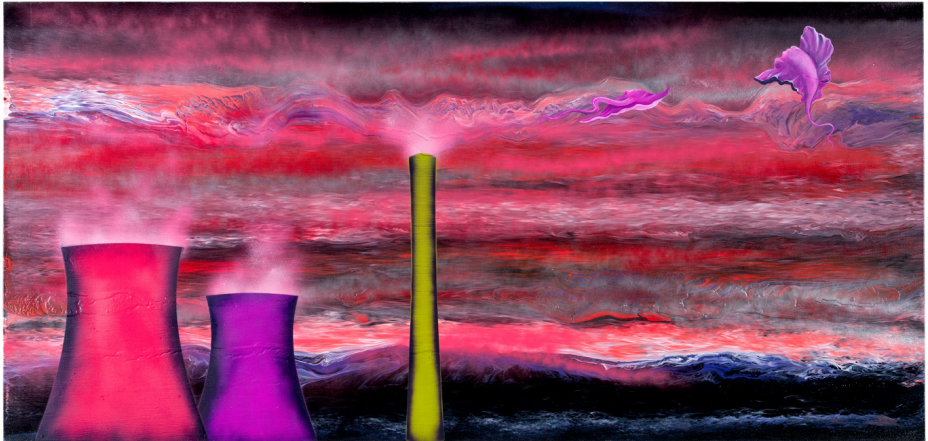
Rectangular or squared spiral shapes in Rosella Namok's paintings and sculptures are adaptations of traditional Lockhart River Aboriginal symbolism. The shapes represent individuals, couples or communities and derive from customary symbolism of the Kaapay and Kuyan moieties that are the two social groups into which people are divided. In recent work Namok aligns the moiety symbol with more contemporary concepts of self- representation (the 'selfie').

Left: *Selfie by the Water (Aqua Blue)* ed. 1/7 2022  
sand cast bronze & patina  
67x35x15cm

Right: *Couple V* 2020 acrylic on  
linen 150x100cm



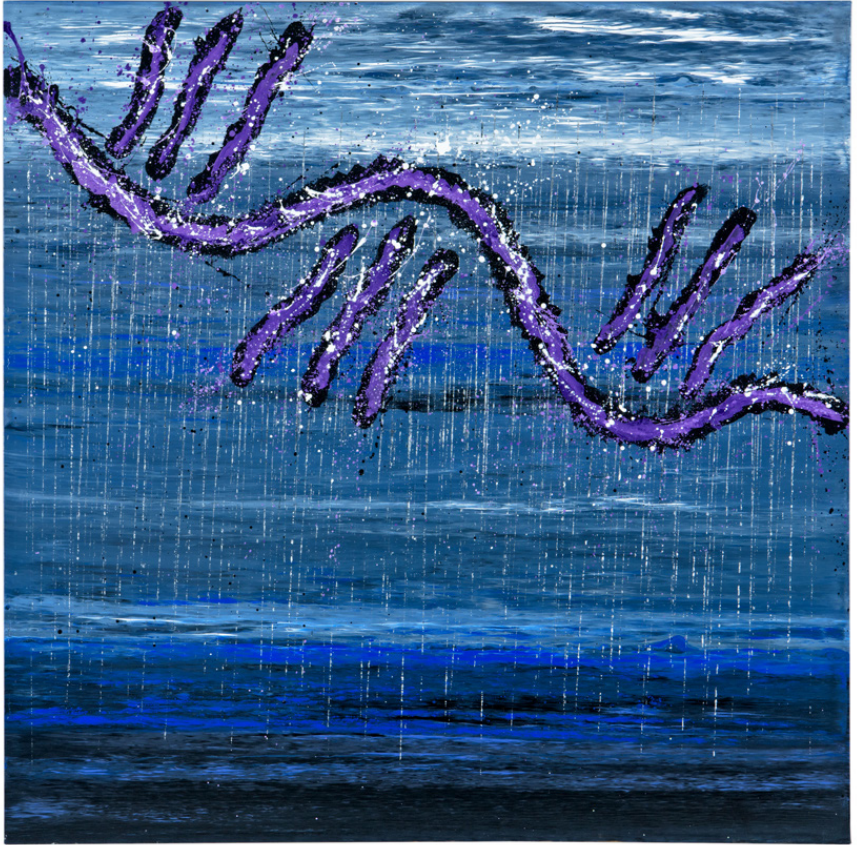
Rosella Namok learnt to be an artist as part of a collective known as the Lockhart River Art Gang. Finding inspiration through a collective remains with her, despite the individuality of her artistic styles. The artist has collaborated with various artists in the last decade, such as Central Australia's Michael Nelson Jagamara and fellow artists represented by Brisbane's FireWorks Gallery – Fiona Omeenyo, Michael Eather and Samantha Hobson. Rosella's stunning skiescapes and seascapes become a more layered and somewhat mysterious world in these collaborations where different voices gently co-exist and co-create something new and often unexpected.



Top: Rosella Namok & Michael Eather  
*Frontier Sky* 2021 acrylic on canvas  
106x222cm

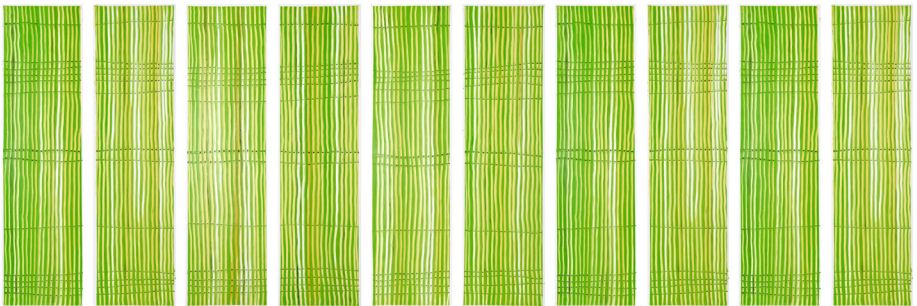
Bottom: Rosella Namok & Samantha Hobson  
*Fire & Rain* 2025 acrylic on canvas 87x195cm



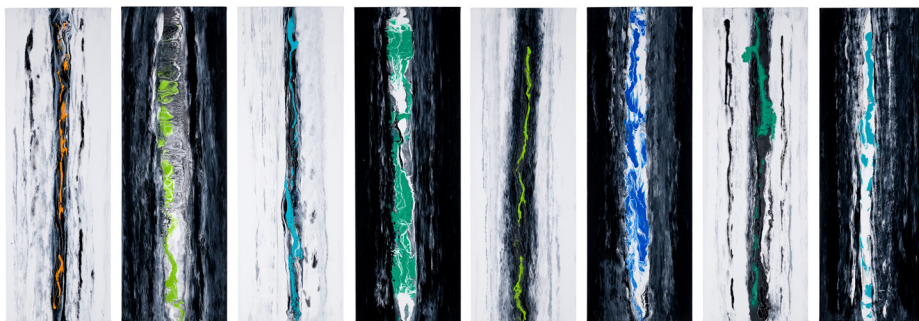
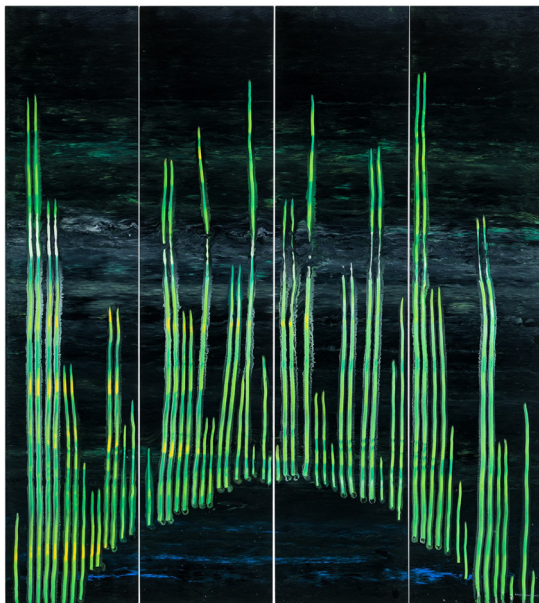


Michael Nelson Jagamara & Rosella Namok  
*Storm Out at Sea 2017*  
acrylic on canvas 180x180cm

Creating one artwork from multiple panels is another feature of Rosella Namok's art. It began early in her career with series of works titled *Old Girls Yarning*. These panels were made similarly to this *Bamboo at Watchee* artwork, with the artist applying a wet on dry technique of drawing her fingers through built up shades of different pigments. In the *Old Girls* series each panel represents a female elder who participated in yarning traditional stories to the artist at the beach, as inspiration for her art. As the elders yarned, they illustrated their storytelling by drawing lines in the sand – each with their own different character of lines. The elders would then come into the studio and ask Rosella to yarn back to them and identify which panel represented them. It was a method of ensuring intergenerational sharing of cultural knowledge. In later works such as *Bamboo at Watchee* the panels tend to represent a visual story similarly to chapters in a book. All telling one story, but each adding slightly different elements.



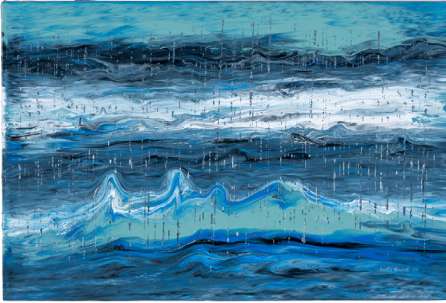
*Bamboo at Watchee* 2018  
acrylic on canvas 180x525cm



Top: *Yakamu - Light on the Water* 2023  
acrylic on canvas 225x200cm

Bottom: *Unchii: Regrowth After Bushfire*  
2021 acrylic on canvas 180x515cm





Early in her career Rosella Namok developed a highly disciplined approach to tonal colours in her paintings. Prior to commencing to paint Rosella selects the entire series of colours she will use and organises them into a tonal rhythm or sequence in which they are painted. So the whole mood of the painting is established before any paint touches the canvas. This disciplined approach possibly stemmed from her introduction to art through the genre of silk screen painting where different colours are applied in sequential screens prepared prior to printing. This preparation means that application of colour can occur quite rapidly with a real sense of blend and build up occurring as she works the paint.

Top Left: *Fishing Weather* 2019  
acrylic on canvas 50x75cm

Top Right: *Rainforest Lagoon I* 2017  
acrylic on canvas 50x75cm

Bottom Left: *Sunset Rain II* 2017  
acrylic on canvas 50x75cm

Bottom Right: *Beachwood II* 2017  
acrylic on canvas 50x75cm  
Collection of Dr Sally Butler





### **COLLECTIONS (Selected)**

Art Gallery of New South Wales  
Sydney

Art Gallery of South Australia Adelaide

Art Gallery of Western Australia Perth

ATSIC Collection Canberra

Australian Heritage Commission  
Canberra

Cairns Regional Gallery Cairns

Columbus State University Georgia  
USA

Federal Court of Australia Brisbane

Flinders University Adelaide

International Education Services  
Brisbane

Macquarie University Sydney

Monash University Melbourne

National Gallery of Australia Canberra

National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne

Northern Territory University Darwin

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of  
Modern Art Brisbane

Queensland University of Technology  
Brisbane

State Library of Queensland Brisbane

The Esk Collection Tasmania

The High Court of Australia Canberra

The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Col-  
lection of the Universi-ty of Virginia

Charlottesville Virginia USA

University of Queensland Art Collec-  
tion Brisbane

Wollongong University NSW

*Temple Bay 2023*  
*bronze, steel & 2 Pac*  
*123x109x37cm*  
*Private Collection*

## List of Works

### *Old Gals Yarnin' I–III* (2023)

Acrylic on canvas

Rockhampton Museum of Art Collection. Winner of The Gold Award 2024.

Gift of the Moya Gold Trust through Rockhampton Museum of Art Gift Fund 2024

### *Full Moon* (2016)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Sunset Rain II* (2017)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Rainforest Lagoon I* (2017)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Fishing Weather* (2019)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Ocean Rain 1* (2019)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Evening Rainstorm* (2021)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Beach Wood II* (2017)

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of Dr Sally Butler

### *Big Ocean Rain* (2019)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Yakamu – Light on the*

*Water* (2023)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Temple Bay A/P* (small)

(2023)

Bronze, steel and 2 Pac

Private Collection

### *Weather Patterns Series*

(2024)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Unchii: Regrowth After*

*Bushfire* (2021)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Selfie at the Party* (2021)

PVC, timber and 2 Pac

### *Selfie by the Water (Aqua Blue)* (2022)

Sand cast bronze and patina, ed. 1/7

### *Couple V* (2020)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Kaapay & Kuyan (Two Moieties – Land & Sea)* (2021)

Sand cast bronze and patina, ed. 4/7

Private Collection

### *Zane & I Blue* (2019)

Acrylic over ink and photographic print

### *Big Sunset Rain* (2019)

Acrylic on canvas

Collection of Susan Buckley and Darryl Dunk

### *Selfie (at Sunset) III* (2018)

Acrylic on canvas

### *Bamboo at Watchee* (2018)

Acrylic on canvas

## Collaborative Works

### *Storm Out at Sea* (2017)

Rosella Namok & Michael

Nelson Jagamara

Acrylic on canvas

Private Collection

### *Frontier Sky* (2021)

Rosella Namok & Michael

Eather

Acrylic on canvas

### *Ghost Ship Storm at Double Stone* (2021)

Rosella Namok, Fiona

Omeenyo & Michael Eather

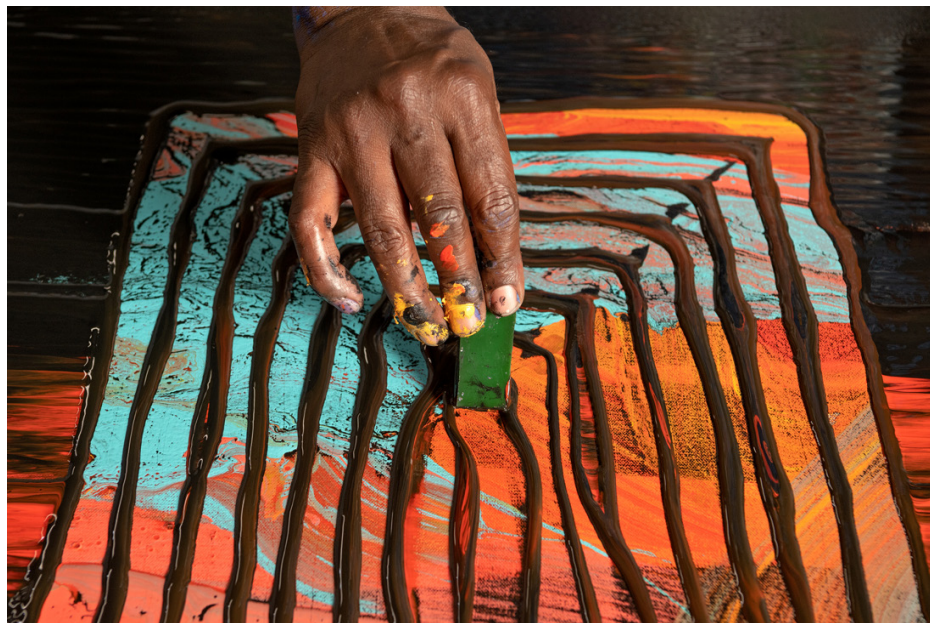
Acrylic on canvas

### *Fire and Rain* (2025)

Rosella Namok &

Samantha Hobson

Acrylic on canvas



Rockhampton Museum of Art and FireWorks Gallery thank and acknowledge Rosella Namok and congratulate her on winning The Gold Award 2024. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr Sally Butler for her curatorial leadership on this exhibition.

Further acknowledgements go to collaborating artists Michael Nelson Jagamara, Fiona Omeenyo, Samantha Hobson, and Michael Eather for their important contributions.

Grateful thanks to private lenders Susan Buckley & Darryl Dunk, Paul & Tanya Licina, Dr Sally Butler and the McCarthy Family and to Carbon Collective, IES College and The University of Queensland Art Museum for the use of images and video. Appreciation to the Rockhampton Museum of Art team, Director Johnathon McBurnie, Curator Shanna Muston and The Gold Award 2024 Campaign donors.



