

Pearl Austin

Mabel Creek: The Resilience of Being

18 April – 23 May 2026

8 Wall Gallery is pleased to announce Pearl Austin's debut solo exhibition *Mabel Creek: The Resilience of Being*.

Pearl Austin is an Antikirinya Matutjara Yankunytjatjara artist and an active member of the Umoona Art Centre, where she currently serves as Board Chair. Austin's practice draws from innate and lived experiences and her connection to Country, particularly in the region of and around Coober Pedy and Mabel Creek. Her current body of work speaks to the correlation of natural and man-made environments, as she paints the creek bed and dam through its various natural states; a storm, a rapid torrent, rainfall, calm waters, and the dry season. Through her depictions of these transformative states, Austin highlights the resilience of Mabel Creek and its adaptability to pastoral interventions, including the building of the dam, that were made prior to the introduction of Native Title in 1993. The adaptability of the Creek is an apt reflection of the strength and resilience of First Nations people in the face of colonisation and its ongoing, systemic ramifications.

Austin works to reconnect with Country following years of separation due to the Stolen Generations. After returning to the region, spending time out at Mabel Creek and close to Tallaringa - the home of Pearl's paternal grandmother - was an act of reprieve for the artist and her family, who were able to rebuild lost cultural knowledge and connection. The artist's intuitive painting style and combination of palette knife application and dotting (wakka wakka) techniques offer a reimagined perspective on this landscape and the impact of Western interventions on Country. A common motif throughout her practice, Austin often references bodies of water in her work, highlighting the dynamism and vitality of water within the arid environment of the central desert. As she paints this region from memory, Austin reminds us of the inextricable link between First Nations people and the land.

"Painting from memory is probably one of my strengths. When I paint I can picture myself being out on Country and I remember the landscape. I'm able to share this not just with my kids and my family, but with everyone. Living in the outback and not taking the time to see what it has to offer - it is something that we all forget to appreciate. Being out on Country keeps me grounded to my culture and to my home." – Pearl Austin

Mabel Creek: The Resilience of Being is the outcome of a 10-day studio residency hosted by 8 Wall Gallery, with the support of Umoona Art Centre.