

onespace



**Sonja Carmicheal**

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

6 March – 11 April 2026

# Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags

6 March – 11 April 2026

**Exhibition Dates:** 6 March – 11 April 2026  
**Opening Event:** Saturday 7 March, 5 – 7pm  
Artist Talk, 4 – 5pm with Freja Carmicheal  
**Gallery Hours:** Tuesday to Friday, 10am – 5pm, Saturday 12pm – 5pm

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Sonja Carmichael's exhibition *Giibum, Gulayi murmurings – Story Bags* that features her exquisite installation, *Wunjayi Wagariinyai Quandamooka Jagun – Yarabin Ragi* (2024) comprises 237 birrepi bunbi (little dillybags) that envelop and embody the collection of jingen jalo (food and fire). Birrepi bunbi, the copper wire woven dillybags, contain elements of Country that Sonja has spent time gathering on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). These elements of Country include: gara (shells) – quampi (shellfish), yugari (pippies), ginyingara (oyster); danggal (banksia nuts); tuckabin (grass tree); burney bean seeds; driftwood, gajur (coral) and yarong (sand), which all symbolise the relationship and interconnection of yarabin ragi (sea and bush) while also echoing and amplifying the stories of Ngumpi (home).

Essay writer, Kimberley Moulton states, “As a senior weaver and researcher, Sonja’s practice connects deeply to Country and seeks to not only pass this knowledge on to her community and family but also, through her weaving and installation practice, to make critical commentary on the health of her land and oceanic ecologies.”



Sonja Carmicheal, *Wunjayi Wagaringya Quandamooka Jagun (Carrying Quandamooka Country Today) – Yarabin Ragi (Sea and Bush)*, 2025. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

# ARTIST BIO



Sonja Carmicheal. Photo: Staul Steed. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja is a senior Quandamooka weaver. In her practice, she draws inspiration from the many stories connected to traditional Quandamooka weaving and explores contemporary materials and techniques – in particular, discarded ‘ghost nets’ and fishing lines – that directly respond to concerns about the preservation of the natural environment.

An active member in her community, she is a leader in the regeneration of Quandamooka weaving, passing on cultural knowledge and skills through workshops, exhibitions, and field research.

She has shown in group exhibitions, including: *All That is Alive* (2025) University of Technology Sydney; *On Country: Photography from Australia* (2025) Recontres d’Arles, France; *Wildflowering By Design* (2025) Redland Art Gallery; *Our Stories: Contemporary Indigenous Weaving* (2025) Cairns Art Gallery; *Create Exchange: Ngumpi* (2024) Redland Art Gallery; *Deep Blue* (2024) Pine Rivers Art Gallery; *Seeds and Sovereignty* (2024) QAGOMA; *How We Remember Tomorrow* (2024) UQAM; *Mare Amoris Sea of Love* (2023) UQAM; *TarraWarra Biennale: ua ususi fa’ava’asavili* (2023), Tarrawarra Museum of Art; *Gone Fishing* (2023), QAGOMA; *Perspectives of Brisbane* (2023), Museum of Brisbane; *The Space Between Us*, Nuit Blanche, (2022) Toronto; *HEAT* (2022), Redcliffe Art Gallery; *Undertow* (2022), Freemantle Arts Centre; *Dabiyil Bajara: Water Footprints* (2022), Tanks Art Centre; *Carriers of Memory* (2021), Museum of Brisbane; *Open Hands* (2020), Tarnanthi, Art Gallery of South Australia; *Long water: fibre stories* (2020), Institute of Modern Art, national touring venues

Her work is held in the collections of numerous galleries including the Queensland Art Gallery, Museum of Brisbane, National Gallery of Victoria, National Museum of Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia, and Redland Art Gallery.

## *Tidal Memories*

There is a language of Country that is not spoken but felt and seen. Freshwater lakes move with the wind, which creates patterns that dance across the water and causes branches to drop; in the heat, the ground crunches and banksia nuts fall, telling us they are drying out; throughout the day, the ocean rises and recedes, lapping at the shores; in the evening, the sun sets, signalling old days that go to sleep and become memories. In the morning, the sun will rise with the potential of a world of possibilities. In sky Country, the moon and movement of stars signal seasons; if you listen deeply, you can hear the movement of this celestial space and the nocturnal creatures who are alive with movement as the rest of the world moves slowly. If we choose to hear, there is certainty in this language that will always share with us the health of Country.

The salt waters of Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) are sentient, alive with cultural memory and continuance, with sea creatures and plant ecologies and the exhibition *Giibum, Gulayi murmurings – Story Bags* shares this magic of Country and cultural knowledge. The ebb and flow of tidal waters – like lungs breathing in and out – have sustained life for thousands of generations, and its movement brings gifts from the sea. Tidal visitations also purge what is not good for it, and the waste of human disrespect for country washes up netting, plastics, and ropes that strangle more-than-human kin. The land also provides abundance – grasses such as Ungaire grow strong like the cultural knowledge that continues to develop with the Traditional Owners.

This intersection of cultural resurgence, Country, and marine waste manifests in the work of Ngugi woman Sonja Charmichael, a custodian of Quandamooka Country, which comprises the waters and lands of and around Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) and Minjerribah,

South-East Queensland. As a senior weaver and researcher, Sonja's practice connects deeply to Country and seeks to not only pass this knowledge on to her community and family but also, through her weaving and installation practice, to make critical commentary on the health of her land and oceanic ecologies.

Central to this exhibition is the installation *Wunjayi Wagaringya Quandamooka Jagun (Carrying Quandamooka Country Today) – Yarabin Ragi (Sea and Bush) (2025)*. This suspended topology highlights the interconnectedness of land and water, and Sonya's home, not only where she lives, but where her spirit belongs and that of her Ancestors. The work is formed by found natural materials, such as gara (shells), quampi (shellfish), yugari (pippies), ginyingara (oyster), danggal (banksia nuts), tuckabin (grass tree), burney bean seeds, driftwood, gajur (coral), and yarong (sand), with the sand underneath in the shape of the quampi shell. Centring this work in the exhibition is centring Country, and it is the language and the knowledge shared by Country that inspires Sonya's work.

Known for her weaving of gulayi (Quandamooka women's bags), Sonja works with material from Country as well as found waste – as she calls it, "marine debris". This pairing not only juxtaposes materials and gives a nod to customary practice and what changes with ongoing colonisation but is also a statement of environmental sustainability. Inspired also by the Ghost Net Weavers of Erub Island, who are similarly combatting ocean pollution, Sonja collects this marine debris on her beach walks at home. In weaving with this material and making gulayi in various forms and shapes, she is actioning the power of Indigenous women's knowledge and caring for Country that is both birthright and responsibility.

## *Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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In a new direction in her research and practice, Sonja brings her thinking around the power of Giibum (the moon) and tidal memory into her weavings, symbolically referencing the language of the moon as murmuring to Country. Her weavings look to the presence of Giibum and its influence on the waters and cycle of life that it connects to and illuminates on Quandamooka Country. The moon has witnessed many ceremonies and changes, to babies being born and to spirits moving to the stars. It has seen and spoken to all of humanity since the first sunset, and it is these stories that the gulayi symbolically, ancestrally, and culturally hold. Through Sonja's dynamic works and her vital role in weaving resurgence, we can connect to the importance of the sentient seas the land that is interconnected and the language of her sky, land and water Country that hold many stories.

**Dr Kimberley Moulton**  
Yorta Yorta



Sonja Carmichael, *Yungulba (tide) Stories* (detail), 2026.  
Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace

Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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Sonja Carmichael

*Wunjayi Wagaringya Quandamooka Jagun (Carrying Quandamooka Country Today) – Yarabin Ragi (Sea and Bush), 2025*

Gara (shells) – quampi (shellfish), yugari (pippies), ginyingara (oyster); danggal (banksia nuts); tuckabin (grass tree); burney bean seeds; driftwood, gajur (coral), sand and fishing line. Installation dimensions variable, 237 birrepi bunbi in total.

\$25,000

Each of these materials symbolise the relationship and interconnection of yarabin ragi (sea and bush) while also echoing and amplifying the stories of Ngumpi (home).

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

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Sonja Carmichael, *Wunjayi Wagaringya Quandamooka Jagun (Carrying Quandmooka Country Today) – Yarabin Ragi (Sea and Bush)*, (detail), 2025. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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Sonja Carmichael  
*yagabili gulayi wunjayi (making dilly bag today), 2024*

Ungaire – woven bag, 32 x 22cm.

\$5,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi, murmurings, (Moon), (Quandamooka women's bag), 2026*

Ghost nets, wire, fishing nets, fishing lines, shells, other marine debris washed on the shores of Minjerribah.

Installation dimensions variable: each Gulayi approx. 20 x 10 x 1cm, 12 Gulayi in total.

\$3,000

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

## Sonja Carmichael

## *Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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Sonja states, "My work *Giibum, Gulayi murmurings – Story Bags* carry the memories and interconnections between people and place, waters and sky."



Sonja Carmichael, *Giibum, Gulayi, murmurings, (Moon), (Quandamooka women's bag)* (detail), 2026. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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Sonja Carmichael  
*Mission Bag #1, 2022*

Ungaire, 18 x 10cm

\$2,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sonja Carmichael  
*Mission Bag #2, 2022*

Ungaire, 18 x 10cm

\$2,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

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Sonja Carmichael  
*Mission Bag #3, 2022*

Ungaire, 18 x 10cm

\$2,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sonja Carmichael  
*Mission Bag #4, 2022*

Ungaire, 18 x 10cm

\$2,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sonja Carmichael

*Copper Bunbi (Dilly bag), 2025-26*

Copper wire, installation dimensions variable: large; 16 x 8cm, medium; 14 x 6.5cm, small; 11.5 x 6cm; 7 Bunbi in total

\$2,000

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

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Sonja Carmichael, *Copper Bunbi (Dilly bag)* (detail), 2025-26. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sonja Carmichael

*Yungulba (tide) Stories, 2026*

Ghost nets, shells, other marine debris washed up on the shores of Minjerribah during changing tides. Each component approx. 50 x 18 x 4cm

\$1,500

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum (Moon phases, story bags, 2025-26)*

Ghost nets, wire, fishing line, other marine debris washed up on the shores of Minjerribah during changing tides. Installation dimensions variable.

\$1,800

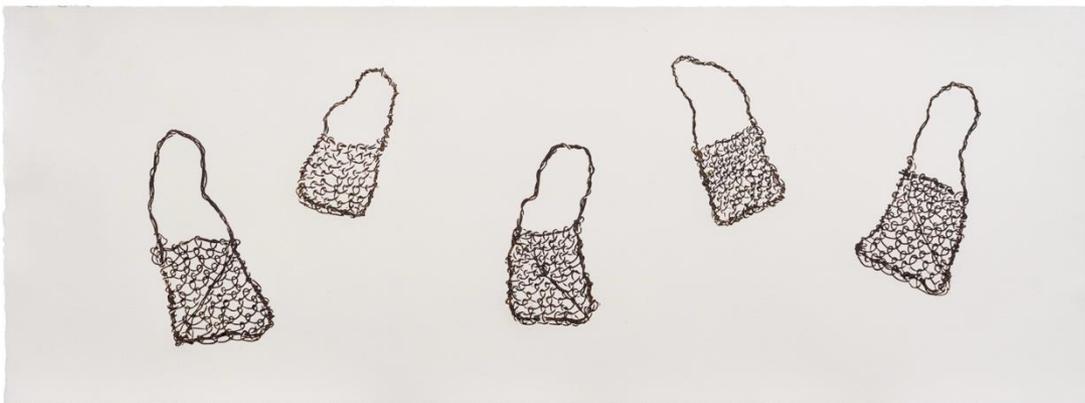
Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

# STOCKROOM WORKS

Sonja Carmichael

*Giibum, Gulayi Murmurings – Story Bags*

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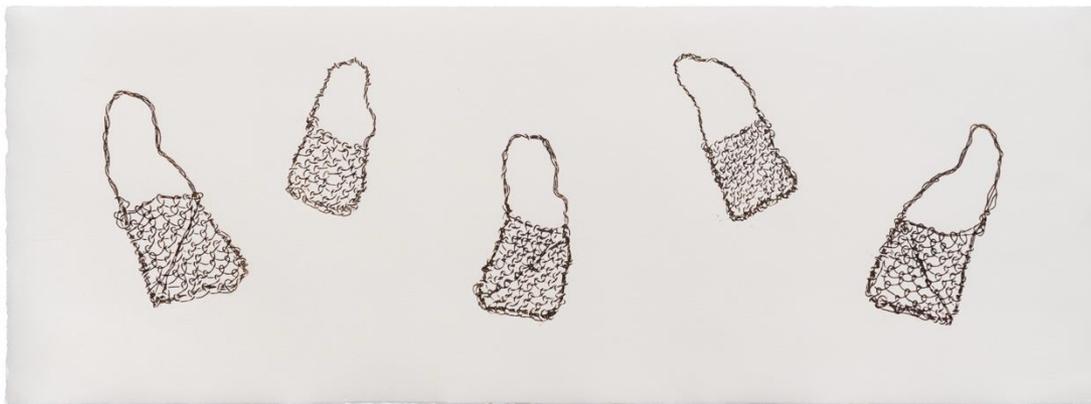


**Sonja Carmichael**  
***Bunbi #1, 2024***

Inked objects monoprint on Hahnemühle 300gsm  
Weiss,  
30.5 x 81cm

**\$1,750 (unframed) | \$2,250 (framed) each**

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



**Sonja Carmichael**  
***Bunbi #2, 2024***

Inked objects monoprint on Hahnemühle 300gsm  
Weiss,  
30.5 x 81cm

**\$1,750 (unframed) | \$2,250 (framed) each**

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Onespace is a Brisbane-based gallery that presents and sells contemporary art, including work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

We curate an exhibition program exploring diverse themes and media, showcasing emerging, mid-career and established artists whose works inform, stimulate and challenge. Onespace welcomes you to engage with the artists and artworks we exhibit.

Onespace is uniquely located adjacent to Maiwar (Brisbane river) beneath the Spice Apartments near the Go Between Bridge in South Brisbane. We are proudly surrounded by the dynamic buzz of the Queensland cultural precinct that is significant to this area of Brisbane.

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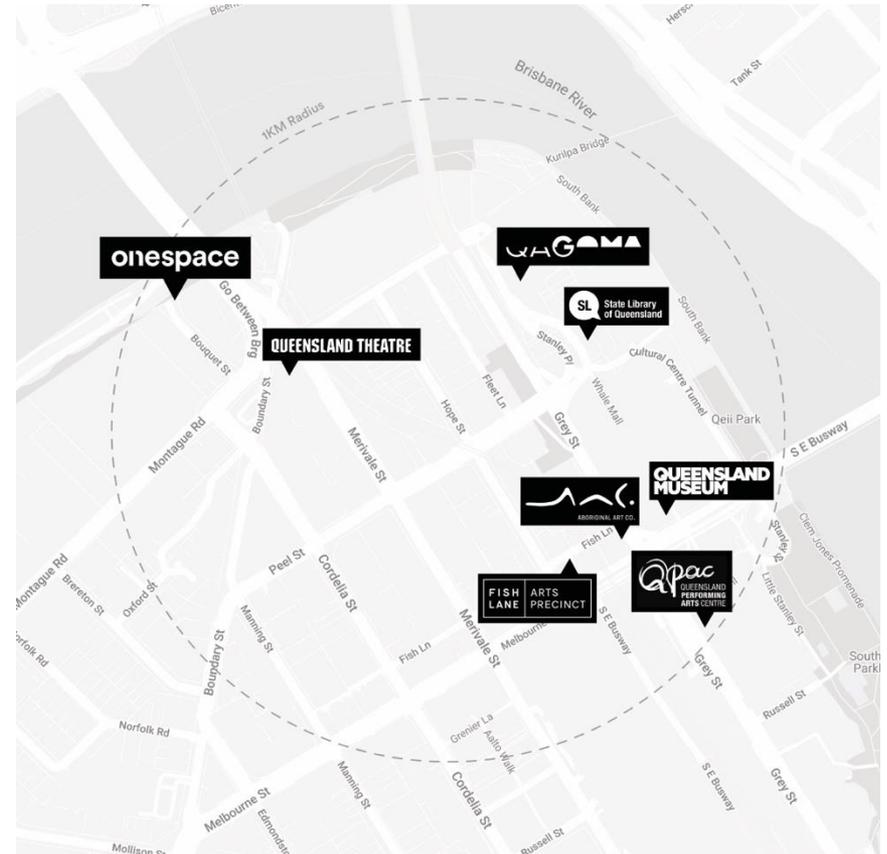
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Onespace Gallery Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday 12pm – 5pm

25A Bouquet Street, South Brisbane Q 4101 Australia



Onespace acknowledges the traditional custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, culture and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.