



Helen S. Tiernan

(Bunurong/Gunai Kurnai)

Helen S. Tiernan is of Irish and Indigenous heritage, born in Sale Victoria who recently moved to Fish Creek from Canberra. Helen says she has come home. Helen is an honours graduate from the Australian National University's (ANU) Canberra School of Art who has distinguished herself as a painter of considerable eloquence, technical virtuosity, irreverence and humor, whose work stands at the forefront of Indigenous identity art and historical discourses today. She has major works of exploration and navigation featured in the permanent exhibition displays of the National Maritime Museum Sydney, Parliament House ACT, and the National Museum Australia.

In 2004 she attained an artsACT project grant for a community research project culminating in a solo exhibition of works based on information gathered from the Gunai-Kurnai people of Gippsland, 'Songlines-journeys through country'. Tiernan has built her reputation on richly research-based content, quoting from her own heritage as well as European and Indigenous archival records.

Cetaceans - Our large sea mammals 2026

Tiernan's most recent body of work – on exhibition now at Phillip Island's Berninnet Gallery – focuses on the whales of the Southern East Coast of Australia, drawing together all threads, incorporating reference to Whale Songlines, navigational discovery and human environmental degradation.

Her highly tactile and surreal paintings capture the beauty, monumentality and power of the ocean's apex creature, the Humpback Whale. She locates them in dark, blue-green uncertain maritime worlds. Their peaceful seclusion, broken by the disruptive horizontal or circular relays of audio vibrations, alerting the viewer to the mysteries of current disturbances in the waters; in this case sonic sound waves graced by a faint background of golden organic pattern.

Helen's Studio Gallery:
46 Old Waratah Rd, Fish Creek.
m 0412 999 824

Represented Galleries: Lauraine Diggins
Melbourne; Adrian Newstead Gallery Sydney



Bass Coast/South Gippsland
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