

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025

In collaboration with Ömie Artists of Oro Province, Papua New Guinea.

Celebrating 50 years of Papua New Guinea's Independence (1975 – 2025)

Papua New Guinea—formerly under Australian, British and German colonial rule—became a sovereign nation in 1975, marking a pivotal moment in its history. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Papua New Guinea's Independence, this exhibition '*The Paintweavers: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea*' presents an extraordinary new body of work by the Ömie women, barkcloth painters from the deep interior of Oro Province's rainforest-clad mountains. Ömie artists have been exhibiting internationally for over two decades and, collectively, the artists have had a profound impact upon, and continue to shape, the global perception of Papua New Guinea's rich and diverse cultural identity.

The Ömie's barkcloth textiles are lovingly and delicately painted by the hands of women—hands that move with grace as they are guided by the ancestors to poetically tell of forest, mountain and sky. Through fine and exquisite mark making, these vibrant barkcloths trace connections between the natural world of the Ömie's homelands and the hidden, unseen realm of the ancestors, as storied throughout Ömie cosmology. The world of the Ömie is one of breathtaking natural beauty, a remote paradise where hidden valleys are ringed by mountains extending to the horizon in every direction, often cloaked in cloud and mist that drifts gently between and beyond the peaks. Ancient, narrow pathways wind through the dense, verdant green of the forests, which burst with flowers, fruits, birds, butterflies and wondrous creatures in a spectrum of splendid colours. Centred around their sacred volcano, Huvaimo, observations of this enchanting natural world—one of the most biodiverse on Earth—have come to adorn the Ömie's barkcloth textiles and are the central facet of their painted motifs.

Through keen observation, Ömie artists look towards the natural jungle environment to uncover geometries and abstract motifs, uncovering an internal logic or system hidden within nature's multifarious forms. The artists convey their wealth of knowledge by harmoniously mingling their multitude of organic shapes, symbols and patterns together in every possible variation. With their sophisticated and precise interlacing of designs, it is as if the artists are weaving with paint—using the painted line as their thread to create dazzling optical rhythms and movement that extend beyond the two-dimensional painting surface. The visual result of this method of painting is perhaps one of the most captivating aspects of Ömie art—that such a technical skill has become so highly accomplished and masterful that, for Ömie artists, it almost seems natural and effortless. Through the dynamic designs, the paintings become activated with the experiential feeling of the landscape and environment, rather than simply remaining a representation of it. The beauty and energy of 'place' comes to life through the paintings. Furthermore, the compositions never remain static but are constantly evolving and reimagined by the artists with infinite adaptation. The vital sensitivity in their approach firmly upholds the barkcloth traditions' sacred origins, and ultimately, holds their precious world together.

Barkcloth is one of the oldest forms of natural cloth fibres in human history. Ömie barkcloth textiles are known as *nioge*, which is the primary artistic medium for their painting. In the absence of a written language, the custom of barkcloth painting remains fundamental to recording, preserving, transmitting and expressing Ömie stories, histories and all aspects of cultural heritage and identity. Ömie barkcloths

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025

are produced entirely by traditional methods—from harvesting the bark, to collecting the natural materials from the forest to create the richly-coloured pigments. Ömie Artists works to conserve not only the living tradition of barkcloth creative practice, but the ancestral, indigenous worldview of Ömie artists. This worldview is embodied in and transmitted within this time-honoured painting tradition—through the ways in which the barkcloths are made; through the customary rituals and ceremonies in which they are used, worn, danced in, and exchanged; and through the oral traditions, wisdom and stories associated with each of the intricate designs. Barkcloth knowledge is passed on through the matrilineal line in a strong, authentic and unbroken lineage, from mother to daughter, as Ömie jagor'e (law) instructs. Ömie women artists play a pivotal role through creating their traditional barkcloth textiles by transmitting culture between generations, demonstrating how women are central custodians for cultural survival. Ömie Artists currently works directly with over forty women barkcloth artists, facilitating production with the highest cultural integrity across ten villages which supports artistic preservation, conservation of the environment, enables economic independence and growth, promotes sustainability, creates community, and empowers women and their families in one of Papua New Guinea's most remote regions.

This exhibition brings together contemporary Ömie paintings that are the latest evolutions of this ancient, yet living, tradition. The exhibition features rare works by elders Lila Warrimou and Faith Jina'emi, and major new works by leading artists such as Diona Jonevari, Jessie Bujava and Magdalene Bujava. The exhibition also presents two special pieces by artist Ilma Ugiobari. Ilma creates her art using the ancient appliqué technique known as sihoti'e taliobamë'e, where the barkcloth is first dyed with mud and then sewn into bold and striking compositions using locally harvested grass thread and a bat wing bone needle. Ilma's mud-dyed barkcloths echo those created by the first female ancestor, Suja, as told in the sacred Ömie creation story.

Exhibiting artists include Lila Warrimou, Stella Üpia, Faith Jina'emi, Wilma Rubuno, Ilma Ugiobari, Jessie Bujava, Magdalene Bujava, Diona Jonevari, Barbara Rauno, Hilda Mekio, Elvina Naumo, Jean Niduvé, Petra Ijaja, and introducing artists, Helen Rubuno and Roseal Rubuno.

Brennan King, Ömie Artists Manager

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Magdalene Bujava (Kolahi)

Sogua'e (sodireje, siha'u'e, roriré, venimomö'e, uejobibgé, modahisu'e, mahuva'ojé, sin'e sore, jaji'e ohu'o areté), 2024

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

82 x 123 cm

(BUJM001 24-004)

\$ 3,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Magdalene Bujava (Kolahi)

Sogua'e (sodireje, siha'u'e, roriré, venimomö'e, uejobibgé, modahisu'e, mahuva'ojé, sin'e sore, jaji'e ohu'o areté), 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

115 x 49 cm

(BUJM002 23-048)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Magdalene Bujava (Kolahi)

Sogua'e (sodireje, siha'u'e, roriré, venimomö'e, uejobibgé, modahisu'e, mahuva'ojé, sin'e sore, jaji'e ohu'o areté), 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

150 x 46 cm

(BUJM003 23-020)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Helen Rubuno

Dahoru'e, bubori anö'e ohu'o bureji/virijo sor'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

86 x 112 cm

(RUBH001 23-049)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Diona Jonevari (Suwarari)

Sin'e soré (Dahoru'e, mokoje nun'e, duahe sore, sihae, bubori anö'e ohu'o odunaigö'e, 2023
locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

139 x 64 cm

(JOND001 23-050)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Barbara Rauno (Inasu)

Siha'e, nuni'e, sigaru anö'e ohu'o kukuhon'e soré (taigu taigu'e, jö'o sor'e ohu'o ori sigé), 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

111 x 62 cm

(RAUB001 23-021)

\$ 3,250

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Barbara Rauno (Inasu)

Siha'e, sigaru anö'e ohu'o kukuhon'e soré (taigu taigu'e, jö'o sor'e ohu'o ori sigé), 2023
locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

98 x 51 cm

(RAUB002 23-051)

\$ 2,500

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Hilda Mekio

Nuni'e, visuanö'e, sabu ahe, dahoru'e, vinohu'e ohu'o bubori anö'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

104 x 65 cm

(MEKH001 23-052)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Elvina Naumo (Ebahino)

Savani degirani, odunaigö'e ohu'o dahoru'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

142 x 87 cm

(NAUE001 23-017)

\$ 4,250

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Elvina Naumo (Ebahino)

Savani degirani, ohu'o nyoni han'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

119 x 56 cm

(NAUE002 23-054)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Jean Niduvé (Urihö)

Ijögijegije, dahoru'e ohu'o bubori anö'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

106 x 86 cm

(NIDJ001 23-055)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Petra Ijaja (Jaujé)

Buriétö'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

119 x 64 cm

(IJAP011 23-056)

\$ 2,500

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Lila Warrimou (Misaso)

Avinö'e, gojavö hanö'e, buborianö'e, dahor'e ohu'o sabu deje, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

79 x 64 cm

(WARL001 23-030)

\$ 1,800

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Stella Üpia (Agisé)

Si'hai'u'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

113 x 48 cm

(UPIS001 23-040)

\$ 1,800

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Faith Jina'emi (Iva)

Vison'e/uge dela, sabu ahe, dahoru'e, bubori anö'e, hurihuri'e, tuböre une ohu'o munë'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

131 x 54 cm

(JINF001 23-041)

\$ 3,250

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Faith Jina'emi (Iva)

Vison'e/uge dela, sabu ahe, dahoru'e, bubori anö'e, hurihuri'e, tuböre une ohu'o munë'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

106 x 55 cm

(JINF002 23-018)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Faith Jina'emi (Iva)

Vison'e/uge dela, sabu ahe, dahoru'e, bubori anö'e, hurihuri'e, tuböre une ohu'o munë'e, 2023
locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

97 x 59 cm

(JINF003 23-042)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Faith Jina'emi (Iva)

Dahoru'e, hurihuri'e, bubori anö'e ohu'o visuanö'e, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

120 x 51 cm

(JINF004 23-043)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Wilma Rubuno (Lamay)

Jubiri anö'e, bubori anö'e, sabu ahe, buro'ö'e, vinohu'ohu'o ori sigé, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

110 x 55 cm

(RUBW001 32-044)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Ilma Ugiobari (Ajikum'e)

Maja'e, dahoru'e, garoro han'e ohu'o ugune, 2024

sihoti'e taliobamë'e - appliquéd, mud-dyed and hand-beaten nioge (barkcloth) hand-stitched with locally harvested river reed thread and a bat wing bone needle

117 x 87 cm

(UGII001 24-001)

\$ 8,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Ilma Ugiobari (Ajikum'e)

Mokojo ano'e, mano ak, dahoru'e, garoro han'e, 2024

sihoti'e taliobamë'e - appliquéd, mud-dyed and hand-beaten nioge (barkcloth) hand-stitched with locally harvested river reed thread and a bat wing bone needle

108 x 65 cm

(UGII002 24-002)

\$ 6,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Jessie Bujava (Kipora)

Sin'e soré (vinohu'e, siha'e, taigu taigu'e, jö'o sor'e), visu anö'e, vavor'e daje, bubori anö'e ohu'o ori sigé, 2023
locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

128 x 67 cm

(BUJJ001 23-019)

\$ 3,000

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Jessie Bujava (Kipora)

Obohutaigu'e ohuo sin'e soré (vinohu'e, siha'e, taigu taigu'e, jö'o sor'e), visu anö'e, vavor'e daje, bubori anö'e ohu'o ori sigé, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

116 x 61 cm

(BUJJ002 23-045)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Jessie Bujava (Kipora)

Sin'e soré (vinohu'e, siha'e, taigu taigu'e, jö'o sor'e), visu anö'e, vavor'e daje, bubori anö'e ohu'o ori sigé, 2023
locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

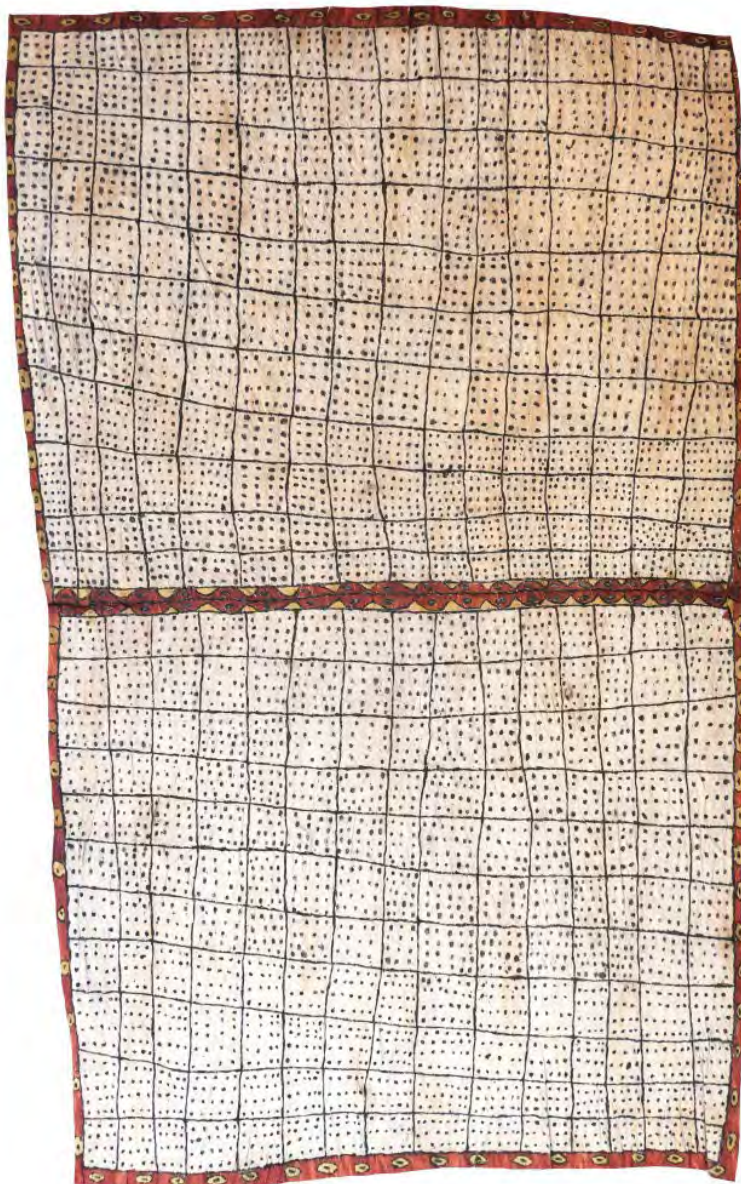
132 x 54 cm

(BUJJ003 23-046)

\$ 2,750

THE PAINTWEAVERS: Ömie Barkcloth Art of Papua New Guinea

20 Sep - 18 Oct 2025



Roseal Rubuno

Udane une, 2023

locally sourced natural pigments on nioge (hand beaten barkcloth)

111 x 70 cm

(RUBR001 23-047)

\$ 2,750