

Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters

**APY LANDS
WOMEN'S
COLLABORATIVE**

ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE Open daily 10am–5pm artgallery.sa.gov.au



APY LANDS WOMEN'S COLLABORATIVE KUNGKARANGKALPA – SEVEN SISTERS, 2016

Twenty four women artists from across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, located in the northwest of South Australia, have collaborated to paint a large canvas depicting the Seven Sisters Dreaming known as *Kungkarangkalpa*. This is a significant *Tjukurpa* (ancestral story) through the entire region. The artists have dedicated this painting to the children of the APY Lands, ensuring that the knowledge of law and country and the ties of family stay strong for the next generation.

This painting is about the constellation of Orion and Pleiades. The sisters are the Pleiades constellation and Orion is said to be (a bad man). *Wati Nyiru* is forever chasing the sisters. According to the story, the seven sisters travel again and again from the sky to the earth to escape the persistent and unwanted attentions of *Wati Nyiru*.

They turn into their human form to hide, but he always finds them and they flee back to the sky. As *Wati Nyiru* is chasing the sisters he tries to catch them by using magic to create the most tempting *kampurapra* (bush tomatoes) for the sisters to eat and the most beautiful *lli* (fig) tree for them to camp under. The sisters however, are too clever for *Wati Nyiru* and outwit him. They go hungry and run through the night rather than be caught by him.

Every now and again one of the women would fall victim to his ways. It is said that he eventually captures the youngest sister, but with the help of the oldest sister, she escapes back to her sisters who are waiting for her. Eventually the sisters fly back into the sky to escape *Wati Nyiru*, reforming the constellation.



image: Artists working on the women's collaborative painting, *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*; Courtesy the artists and Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Rhett Hammerton

image detail (front cover): Freda Brady, Wawiriya Burton, Angkaliya Eadie Curtis, Tjangili Tjapukula George, Sandra Goodwin, Beryl Jimmy, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Iluwanti Ungkutjuru Ken, Sylvia Ken, Tjungkara Ken, Manyitjanu Lennon, Betty Muffler, Matjangka Nyukana Norris, Mary Katatjuku Pan, Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, Antjala Tjayangka Robin, Alison Munti Riley, Tjariya Nungalka Stanley, Carlene Thompson, Maringka Tunkin, Jeannie Wallatina, Judy Wallatina, Puna Yanima, Yaritji Young, *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*, 2016, Fregon, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on linen; Acquisition through TARNANTHI: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Courtesy the artists and Tjungu Palya, Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Saul Steed

EARLY YEARS

RESPONDING

Describe the shapes, colours, lines and patterns you can see. Which of these are repeated?

Why do you think these marks are so important to the artists?

Does this painting feel hot or cold?

The Seven Sisters were tempted by bush tomatoes and the most beautiful fig-tree to camp under. Name a beautiful place or tasty food you find tempting. As a class, share your responses. What similarities and differences do you notice between all the places and items listed?

With a friend, share your favourite story.

MAKING

Read a well-known creation story as a class. While listening to the narrator, create an illustration to accompany this story.

Make a list of some dangerous things you need to be mindful of. For example, you may need to be careful crossing the road or wary when talking to strangers. Create a painting that warns people about a dangerous situation.



image: Freda Brady, Wawiriya Burton, Angkaliya Eadie Curtis, Tjangili Tjapukula George, Sandra Goodwin, Beryl Jimmy, Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, Iluwanti Ungkutjuru Ken, Sylvia Ken, Tjungkara Ken, Manyitjanu Lennon, Betty Muffler, Matjangka Nyukana Norris, Mary Katatjuku Pan, Betty Kuntiwa Pumani, Antjala Tjayangka Robin, Alison Munti Riley, Tjariya Nungalka Stanley, Carlene Thompson, Maringka Tunkin, Jeannie Wallatina, Judy Wallatina, Puna Yanima, Yaritji Young, *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*, 2016, Fregon, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on linen; Acquisition through TARNANTHI: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Courtesy the artists and Tjungu Palya, Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Saul Steed

PRIMARY

RESPONDING

According to the story, the seven sisters travel again and again from the sky to the earth. Do you think you are looking up at the sky or down at the earth in this painting?

Use a viewfinder to isolate a section of the painting. How do you think the artists made the marks you have selected?

Examine astronomical photographs of Pleiades. Compare these images to the painting *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*. What similarities and differences do you notice?

Imagine *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters* was printed onto a postcard that you could send to a friend who hasn't seen the painting before. What would you write about this work of art?

Kulata Tjuta: a work for Kunmanara (Gordon) Ingkatji is another large collaborative painting on display in TARNANTHI. It was created by twenty-three men,

both senior and emerging, from across the APY Lands. Compare the APY Lands women's and men's collaborative paintings. Can you see the unique styles of individual artists? What similarities do the paintings share and how are they different?

Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters is a significant *Tjukurpa* (ancestral, creation story). After reading the story, why do you think the artists have captured this story? What are the messages they artists are trying to send to younger generations?

Some Aboriginal creation stories, like the Seven Sisters, can sound a little scary. What do you think is the purpose for telling scary stories? Are there other works in TARNANTHI that you find a little frightening? With a friend, discuss why some artists might depict scary elements in their story.



image: Alec Baker, Eric Kunmanara Barney, Taylor Wanyima Cooper, Pepai Jangala Carroll, Sammy Dodd, Kunmanara (Ronnie) Douglas, Stanley Douglas, Arnie Frank, David Frank, Witjiti George, Rupert Jack, Willy Kaika Burton, Brenton Ken, Freddy Ken, Ray Ken, Peter Mungkuri, Vincent Namatjira, David Pearson, Jimmy Pompey, Willy Muntjantji Martin, Mick Wikilyiri, Mumu Mike Williams, Anwar Young, *Kulata Tjuta – A work for Kunmanara (Gordon) Ingkatji*, 2016, Indulkana and Amata, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on linen and hand carved wood; Acquisition through TARNANTHI: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Courtesy the artists and Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Saul Steed

PRIMARY

Research the bush tomato. What other bush foods are found in the desert?

Imagine you are taking a trip to the APY Lands. Investigate the geography, flora and fauna. What items will you need to take with you and what would you hope to see?

Research other ways the knowledge of astronomy has been used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

There are other variations to the Seven Sisters narrative in other places across Australia, in Greek mythology and in Japanese and Indian cultures. What other versions of this story can you find? Compare one of these stories to the APY Lands women's collaborative, *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*. Why do you think this story is popular among multiple cultures?

MAKING

Compile a list of definitions of the new words you have learnt after your visit to TARNANTHI.

Think about a tradition or belief that your parents or grandparents have passed down in your family. What are some things that are unique to your family? Create a painting that will help to keep your family tradition or belief strong for future generations.

Wati Nyiru is described as a 'bad man' in the Seven Sisters story. Brainstorm a list of characters in other stories that feature a villain or an antihero. What characteristics do these villains or 'bad men' share? Use your list of your characteristics as inspiration for your own villain or antihero.

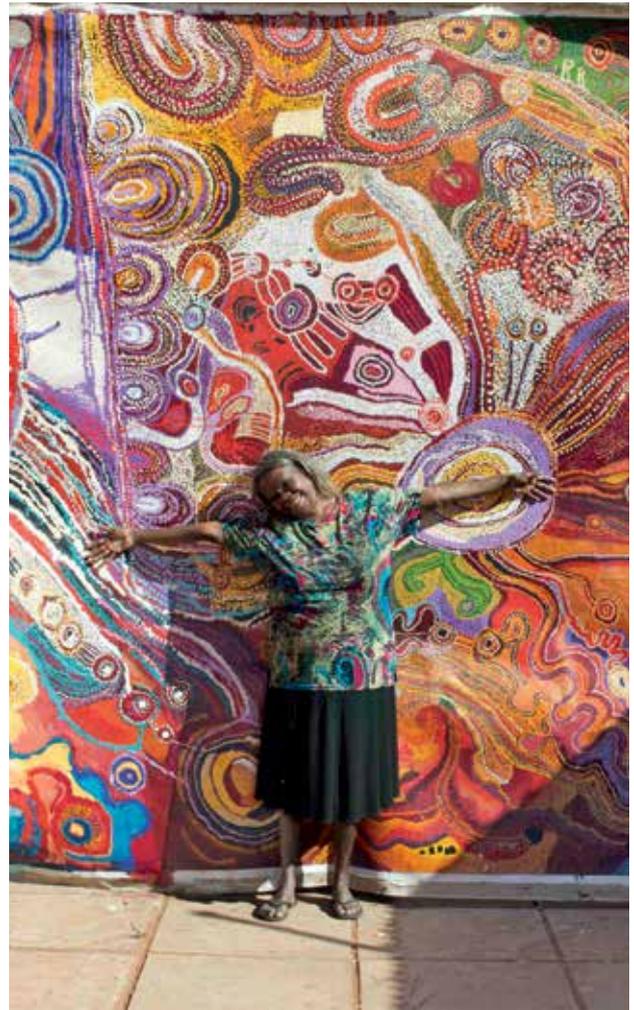


image detail: Matjanga Nyukana Norris in front of the women's collaborative painting, *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*; Courtesy the artists and Tjungu Palya, Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Rhett Hammerton

SECONDARY

RESPONDING

Why is the *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters* such a significant *Tjukurpa* for future generations? How is this story relevant for young people today?

Find another work of art where an artist or artists have depicted an ancestral creation story. Compare this work of art with *Seven Sisters* in terms of style and technique.

Other cultures may look at the sky in slightly different ways and have alternative names for certain constellations. For example, many Aboriginal people tell stories about The Great Emu as opposed to what many people recognise as the Milky Way. Investigate the Aboriginal names for other well-known constellations.

After visiting TARNANTHI, write down your observations of the works of art on display. Write a response to the exhibition that highlights the diversity of Aboriginal culture and society.

MAKING

Nyurpaya Kaika Burton, one of the women artists to contribute to *Kungkarangkalpa – Seven Sisters*, describes the painting as being 'about seven strong women looking after each other and working together to stay safe. The story speaks to the importance of strength of the group of women together, and the importance of never leaving a family or woman member behind.' Investigate other stories about strong and resilient women. Create a work of art that tells their story and communicates a positive message to young people.

Take time to scan the place where you live. Identify the three most dominant colours. Using this palette, create a work of art that captures the essence of your environment.



Artists came from across the APY Lands to Kaltjiti Arts, Fregon, South Australia, to work on the women's collaborative painting, *Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters*; Courtesy the artists and Ernabella Arts, Iwantja Arts, Kaltjiti Arts, Mimili Maku Arts, Tjala Arts, APY Art Centre Collective, photo: Rhett Hammerton

RESOURCES

BOOKS

N.Cumpston, TARNANTHI Catalogue, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide 2017

Kleiner, S & Neale M, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne Australia, 2008

Tjala Arts, *Nganampa Kampatjangka Unngu*, Beneath the canvas: The lives and stories of the Tjala artists, Wakefield Press, Australia, 2015

WEBSITES

ABC 89I Interview with Adelaide Planetarium astronomer Paul Curnow (Aboriginal Skies)
<http://bit.ly/2g0bcLw>

ABC News – Aboriginal Astronomy the star of Dreamtime stories
<http://ab.co/2xAIOoo>

ABC Science – Australia’s First Astronomers
<http://ab.co/2i2uKmT>

Aboriginal Astronomy
<http://bit.ly/2xyTbiG>

APY Art Centre Collective
<http://bit.ly/2y7NXtv>

The Bulletin of the Astronomical Society of South Australia
<http://bit.ly/2yftFhl>

The Conversation – Stories from the sky: astronomy in Indigenous knowledge
<http://bit.ly/2xwK9mn>

National Museum Australia – Songlines Tracking the Seven Sisters
<http://bit.ly/2yfhVvA>

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Information and hyperlinks correct at time of print. Art Gallery of South Australia staff Kylie Neagle and Lisa Slade contributed to the development of this resource.