

Start at home

Sun Weaving



Ngalbenbe is the sun. Beyond Ngalbenbe is another larger star, the mother of Ngalbenbe. Each morning Ngalbenbe rises through the sky and sets at night.

– Lena Yarinkura, 2018

About the artist

Threads of creativity, culture and collaboration are woven through Lena Yarinkura's whole family. Lena is a Kune woman from central Arnhem Land, and first learned weaving skills from her mother. Lena soon became known for her lively animal sculptures, and went on to develop groundbreaking new fibre sculpture techniques with her husband, fellow artist Bob Burruwul. Lena teaches weaving skills to her children and grandchildren, and collaborated with her daughter Yolanda Rostron on this installation – inspiring and strengthening future generations just like the mother of *Ngalbenbe*.

About the work

This installation tells a significant ancestral story of the Kune and Rembarrnga people. A long time ago, three fishermen went down to the river, hoping to catch lots of fish. But the water level was too high for their butterfly fish trap. So they made a big fire and asked *Ngalbenbe*, the Sun, for help. *Ngalbene* shone down powerfully, and the heat made the water level drop. At last the three fishermen could place their trap and catch fish for their community. Lena and Yolanda used paperbark, kurradjong, pandanus and other materials from their Country to sculpt the forms of the three fishermen, their net, and *Ngalbenbe*.



Materials you need

- gold cardboard (A4 or larger)
- a lead pencil
- scissors
- wool, ribbon or yarn in warm colours (red, orange, yellow or gold)
- pipe cleaners in warm colours
- a hole punch

Take it further

Learn some words in the Kune language of Arnhem Land:

bininj – people / men

korokko – long ago

djenj – fish

walabi – butterfly fish trap

manme – food

Create your own Sun Weaving

- 1 Draw a large circle on the back of the gold cardboard and cut it out.
- 2 Cut small triangular notches around the edge of the circle. This is your sun frame.
- 3 Loop wool around the frame and tie a knot at the back to secure.
- 4 Weave and wind your wool between the notches, to create criss-crossing lines of colour. You can make an even pattern, or freestyle in all directions for a busy web effect.
- 5 When you want a change, snip your wool and tie on the next colour. When you're finished, tie a knot at the back to secure your weaving.
- 6 Now punch a hole between each notch on your frame. Cut pipe cleaners into short lengths to make rays for your sun. Thread a pipe cleaner through each hole, twisting once to secure.
- 7 Hang your weaving in a sunny spot to see it catch the light!

image Lena Yarinkura, Kune people, Northern Territory, born 1960, Buluhkaduru, Northern Territory, *Ngalbenbe (sun story)*, 2018, Ankababirri, Northern Territory, pandanus (*Pandanus spiralis*), kurrajong (*Brachyhiton populneus*), paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), feathers, rocks, sand, earth pigments, natural dyes, (dimensions variable); Gift of the artist and acquisition through Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, © Lena Yarinkura/Maningrida Arts & Culture/Copyright Agency, photo: Grant Hancock.

***Ngalbenbe (sun story)* is on display in Gallery 22B as part of Tarnanthi 2020: Open Hands**

We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au

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