

Start at home

Repeated forms



You know that *Mamu* are there, they're there in the cracks of the earth, they're there all around us, every day they're here! They're seriously disturbing... they're also really playful.

– Nici Cumpston, 2020

About the artist

Naomi Kantjuri is a prolific Pitjantjatjara artist who was born on Ngadjuri Country at Victory Downs, not far from Adelaide. Today she lives and works over a thousand miles away in the the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands. Moving to her own Country unearthed Naomi's hidden powers as a *Ngangkari*, a traditional healer. She became a sought after *Ngangkari*, making Anangu well with her *mara ala*, open hands. Naomi was a finalist in the Wynne prize two years running for her collaborative *Tjukurpa* paintings, created with Mona Mitakiki and Tjimpayi Presley. Naomi is also a member of the Tjanpi Desert Weavers.

About the work

This painting is part of a series all about *Mamu*, the spooky spirits. Anangu children learn that the *Mamu* are all around, waiting to get them if they don't behave. But the spirits have feelings too! Naomi tells the story of a sad mother *Mamu* turning to stone after her daughter ran away with a human man. In this piece, small red and black figures are arranged evenly, giving a feeling of balance. Other paintings in the series have mostly black figures, with just a few red, or group the red and black on opposite sides of the canvas. By using a limited palette and repeating similar forms, Naomi draws our attention to small details and points of difference.

Presented by



Materials you need

- A4 coloured paper in 2 different colours
- 1 sheet of white A3 paper
- a lead pencil
- scissors
- a glue stick
- a black pen or texta
- a hole punch (optional)

Take it further

Stories of the *Mamu* warn Anangu children of the dangers of the world, to keep them safe at home. What sorts of spooky stories or cautionary tales are told in your community? What kinds of behaviours are encouraged (and discouraged) by those stories?

Create another picture, making your special feature figure distinctive from the rest in shape, colour or size.

Create your own Repeated forms

- 1 Fold a sheet of coloured paper into quarters.
- 2 Draw a person or animal on the folded paper. Draw right in the middle, without touching the edges. Keep this drawing simple and bold - just an outline will do.
- 3 Carefully cut out your drawing, cutting through all four layers of paper to make four copies of the same shape.
- 4 Repeat these steps with your second colour of paper. You should end up with eight cut-out figures in two different colours.
- 5 Start placing your figures on the white A3 paper. Move them around to try out different arrangements: grouping by colour or mixing them all up, turning figures sideways or upside down, spacing them evenly or leaving large areas of empty white.
- 6 Choose one figure to be the odd one out. Make it stand out by punching holes in the paper or adding marks in black pen. Where will you place this special figure?
- 7 When you're happy with your composition, stick the figures down with glue. What kind of story or relationship is suggested by the arrangement that you chose?

detail Naomi Kantjuri, Pitjantjatjara people, South Australia, born 1944, Victory Downs, South Australia, *Mamu*, 2019, Amata, South Australia, pigmented ink on paper, 31.0 x 40.8 cm; Gift of the APY Art Centre Collective in recognition of the Art Gallery of South Australia's support in 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, © Naomi Kantjuri/Tjala Arts/ Copyright Agency.

Mamu is on display in Gallery 23B 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

@agsa.adelaide #agsastart