

Sylvia Kanytjupai Ken, Tjungkara Ken & the Ken Sisters Collaborative

Seven Sisters: Kungkarangkalpa

24 August – 18 September 2021

The exhibition 'Seven Sisters' showcases the distinct artistic styles and visions of Sylvia Ken and Tjungkara Ken, two award-winning female indigenous artists, both at the forefront of contemporary painting in Australia. Alongside the work of Sylvia Ken and Tjungkara Ken, the exhibition also features large scale paintings by the renowned Ken Sisters Collaborative (Freda Brady, Sandra Ken, Tjungkara Ken, Maringka Tunkin and Yaritji Young).

Based in the Amata community in the remote Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia and painting at Tjala Arts, Sylvia and Tjungkara's evocative paintings are a celebration of Anangu culture and connection to country alongside their individual expression of 'Tjukurpa' (ancestral knowledge and law).

Sylvia and Tjungkara paint, in different but related ways, the Seven Sisters creation story, an ancestral narrative of the Pleiades constellations (the sisters) and a sinister man (Orion) who followed them across earth and sky. Both Sylvia and Tjungkara's family are traditional owners of significant sites where the Seven Sisters story takes place with each painting referencing this story and the important sites within the vast landscape. These stories are the artists' birthright and come with a responsibility to continue the passing of culture and knowledge to the next generation.

"I listen to the old people's stories and I think about these stories, and then ideas come for my paintings. I listen to my mother and father, to my grandmother and grandfather. I listen when they are talking about 'Tjukurpa' and telling creation stories and when they say to me 'No, you should paint this way, the Seven Sisters'".

– Sylvia Ken, 2020

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

In recent years both Tjungkara Ken, Sylvia Ken and the Ken Sisters Collaborative have all established themselves as important figures in the Australian cultural landscape with wins in major art awards. Most recently Tjungkara Ken was awarded the 2020 Roberts Family Prize (Wynne Prize) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales a year after Sylvia Ken was announced as the 2019 Wynne Prize winner. The Ken Sisters Collaborative were awarded the Wynne Prize in 2016 and the People's Choice Award at the 2018 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards.

Artworks by Tjungkara Ken, Sylvia Ken and the Ken Sisters Collaborative are held in numerous public collections including Artbank, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and QAGOMA.