SONGLINES PROJECT 2012-2015
Alive with the Dreaming!
Songlines of the Western Desert
Kulilaya, ngura milmilpatjara; Tjukurpa alatjitu!
Listen this land is sacred, alive with the Dreaming!
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Songlines Project Partners,

Welcome to the Songlines of the Western Desert Project an arts and cultural heritage project conceived by senior Aboriginal artists and custodians of the Martu, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands developed in collaboration with the national institutions of the Australian National University and the National Museum of Australia.

Inspired by Ivy Nganyinytja OAM and Charlie Ilyatjari

*Kulilaya, ngura milmilpatjara; Tjukurpa alatjitu!*
*Listen this land is sacred; Alive with the Dreaming!*

Indigenous Songlines are the foundation cultural routes of Australia

The aim is to increase national recognition and understanding of Songlines as complex pathways of Indigenous spiritual, ecological, economic, cultural and ontological knowledge. This cross cultural research project has involved artists, singers, storytellers, dancers, scientists and anthropologists who value the integration of Indigenous and western knowledge in understanding and managing our shared cultural and natural environments. Indigenous Songlines have mapped the presence of Ancestral Beings in the land long before European colonisers drew their state line boundaries across the Australian Desert. The journeys connect the people and their land, the animals they hunt, the foods they gather, the life giving waterholes, their related languages and kinship structures.

The scope of this project is limited to the ‘open knowledge’ of two creation ancestors’ pathways, the Ngintaka or Perentie Lizard of NW South Australia and the Seven Sisters who travelled across a region of 486,000 square kilometres through the three states of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

WARNING:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this document may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.

This Photo Report is based on the Songline Project’s trips and events from 2008-2018.
Front Cover: C100 Photo by Wayne Quilliam.
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Decision to seek funding for the Ngintaka project.

"The project is to follow the Ngintaka tracks from Walatina across the APY lands. To hold the story, to keep it strong. Myself Marita, Kanytjupai and Alison Carroll have already made a preliminary approach to the Arts Council for funding for this project." Marita Baker, 2008

"The story should start at the beginning when he woke up and went to the toilet and heard the grindstone." Senior Custodian, Bernard Tjalkuri, 2008
Songlines Workshop, Canberra 2010

Tjungu nyinara wangkara kulilkatinyi – Meeting together talking and thinking

The Songlines Project Workshop was convened at the Australian National University in late 2010, bringing together interested Aboriginal organisations, government agencies, researchers and national cultural institutions, to discuss collaboration on this project of national Indigenous heritage significance.

The Songlines Project adopts the NPY Women’s Council Research Method

NPY WOMEN’S COUNCIL ACTION RESEARCH METHOD

Maru munu piranpa tjungu nyinara wangkara kulilkatinyi - Black and White sitting together discussing and considering over a long period of time.

WALYTJANGKA - relating to Anangu from a kinship position defined by them.

MALPARARA - always working with an Anangu friend or mentor.

KULILKATINYI munu NYAKUKATINYI - listening and looking over a long period of time. Not just observing, but becoming part of the community and gaining an understanding of their perspective.

WANGKARA KULILKATINYI munu PALLYALKATINYI - to keep on discussing and reviewing what you make and design over a long period of time
Songlines ARC Project Workshop, 2010

Funded by ANU College of Arts and Sciences,
Hosted by Research School of Humanities and the Arts (RSHA)

**Australian National University Convener**
Dr Diana James, Research Fellow RSHA, ANU

**Interpreter**
Lizzie (Elizabeth) Ellis, Interpreter, c/ Tjarlirli Art, Tjukurla. Expert consultant

**Anangku Arts and Culture Aboriginal Corporation**
Mr David Miller, Chairman Anangku Arts & Chairman Tjungu Playa
Milyika Carroll, Director Anangku Arts & Chairperson Ernabella Arts
Marita Baker, Board Member Anangku Arts & Chairperson Kaltjiti Arts
Kanytjupai Robin, Board Anangku Arts & Secretary Kaltjiti Arts
Liz Tregenza, Manager, Anangku Arts and Culture Corporation

**Australian National University - Research School of Humanities and the Arts**
Prof Howard Morphy, Director RSHA
John Carty, Anthropologist, PhD Candidate
Maree Meredith, Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology
Jodi Neale, Native Title Anthropologist, Canberra
Nicholas Hall, Institute for Professional Practice in Humanities and the Arts (IPPHA)
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council (NPYWC)
Jo Foster, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Warakurna

**NPY Art Centres**
Edwina Circuit, Manager, Warakurna Artists
Clive Scollay, Manager, Maruku Arts And Crafts
Rene Kulitja, Artist, Maruku Arts, Expert consultant

**The National Museum of Australia**
Mr Andrew Sayers, Director National Museum of Australia
Assoc. Prof. Margo Neal, Senior Indigenous Curator & Research Fellow
Dr Mike Smith, Senior Research Fellow, Archaeologist
Dr Libby Robin, Senior Research Fellow, Environmental History

**The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities**
Jane Dewing, Senior Heritage Officer WA( SEWPac) Ngaanyatjarra Council
David Brooks, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Senior Anthropologist
Bryony Nicholson, Ngaanyatjarra Council, Anthropologist

**Yankunytjatjara Consultant**
Karina Lester, Mobile Aboriginal Language Unit, Uni of Adelaide. Expert consultant

**Philanthropic Sector**
Phil Price, Philanthropist, Canberra. Expert consultant
Maru Munu Piranpa Tjungu Palyantjaku - Two Way Thinking and Researching

Aboriginal and non-aboriginal organisations, researchers and government agencies at the meeting in Canberra discussed how we could all work together on the Songlines Project.

Aims of the Songlines Project

Bush trips guided by senior men and women of NPY Lands; Anangu with whitefella researchers to tell the story straight:
• Inma (song, dance, story)
• Walka Iritija (rock art and archaeology)
• Walka Kuwaritja (painting, tjanpi, punu)
• Ngura Walytja (caring for country, rangers & ethno botany)

Outcomes:
• Travelling along the songlines sharing and recording knowledge for Anangu and research.
• Exhibitions – South Australian Museum (Wati Ngintaka)/National Museum of Australia (Kungkarangalpa).

David Miller said this ‘archaeology’ was mapping Walka Iritija;

"Visit places along Songlines with Anangu connected to places, and ‘map’ places and connections from their knowledge. Then, "You can ‘see’ that map – what he been showing you. You can’t see any motor car tracks – just what he is showing you." David Miller, 2/11/10
Songlines Project Governance Structure

The Songlines Project Governance Structure is stipulated in Schedule D of the fully executed research agreement between the administering organisation, the ANU and all the project partners, this Partners Agreement was signed on 30 March 2012.

The Governance Structure identifies Elders Consultative Committee to provide advice on Indigenous Cultural knowledge and Intellectual Property to the Project Management Committee of the Project Partners.

Each public event has a specific Indigenous Curatorium to advise of the appropriate use of Indigenous knowledge in paintings, films, photographs, song, dance, written records or material objects.


1.Songlines Project protocols and trips to country discussions at Fregon. Photo Iain Morton, courtesy of Ananguku Arts, 2011.
Community Consultations about the Songline Project Protocols 2011-2012

Left to Right:
2&3. Harry Tjutjuna discussing protocols of painting Ngintaka with Diana James, Ninuku Arts 2011.
Photos Rachael Thornton.
4&5. NPY Women’s Council supported the Songlines Project in principle at the 30th Anniversary AGM in Umuwa, 2010. The NPYWC coordinator Andrea Mason later met with Margo Neal (NMA) and Diana James (ANU) to discuss the specifics of the Songlines Project partners’ agreement and protocols.
Photos courtesy of NPY Women’s Council, 2011.

Project Partners Agreement protects Indigenous IP

After the ARC grant was announced in late 2011 the Partners spent 8 months negotiating the terms of the Research Agreement to ensure that Indigenous Intellectual Property was protected. The Project established a new benchmark for recognition of Indigenous Intellectual Property in research agreements with the Australian National University. The Songlines Research Project Partners Agreement ensures that all Indigenous knowledge remains the Intellectual Property of the Traditional Owners and their approval must be obtained before the public use of any of their traditional knowledge in print, film, photographs and exhibitions. They have the right to restrict access to any sensitive material.
Artists sang and danced the Ngintaka Inma while they painted together at Tjala Arts in 2011. This Ngintaka painting was a collaborative work by women artists from Amata, Fregon and Ernabella as a celebration of the Songlines Project.


APY Lands Art Centres & Artists celebrate the Ngintaka Tjukurpa 2011-2012

These artworks later featured in the Ngintaka Exhibition in SA Museum 2013.

Wati Ngintaka Tjukurpa Stories of the Lizard Man

A group of artists from the Kalka Pipalyatjara communities demonstrated the diversity, strength and individuality of their depictions of the Wati Ngintaka Tjukurpa. Ninuku Arts exhibition at Raft Artspace, Alice Springs September, 2012.


4. Niningka Lewis at Maruku Arts was creating her unique walka boards of the Ngintaka story, 2011-12.
Ananguku Arts Songlines Project Meeting, Alice Springs 2011

Working together on Songlines Project Protocols:
Ananguku Arts Board met with APY Art Centres

“I think that a long time ago, maybe 1930 or 1940 a really long time ago, before we were born; the first white men came with bullocks and camels they came down our Tjukurpa Dreaming tracks and Anangu were pushed out! This Songlines Project is really important because Anangu are re-stating, saying this is how it was before all that, remapping the land.” Rene Kulitja

“It is OK for many women to travel together along the Tjukurpa songline, to see where the women camped and went. But only the nguraritja, traditional owners, can paint those places on canvas.” Nyurpanya Burton
The meeting heard that Project funding had been released by the Australian Research Council after all Partners signed the Agreement in April 2012. The following items were discussed:

- Purpose and conditions of ARC funding over four years 2012-2016
- Indigenous Intellectual Property agreement to protect any knowledge shared by traditional owners
- Trips to Country requested by Traditional Owners of the Ngintaka and Seven Sisters Songlines
- Research permit approved for all APY Lands except Walatina on the request of Yami Lester to be respected.

RESOLUTION: That this meeting of Traditional Owners and Partner organisations at Amata supports the Ngintaka and Kungkarangkalpa project.

Attendees: Robert Stevens (Chairman), David Miller (Interpreter), Frank Young, Freddy Ken, Tjampawa Kawiny, Tapaya Edwards, Mary Pan, Paniny Mick, Yarritji Young, Kanyjtupai Robin, Mick Wikilyiri, Barney Wangin, Ray Ken, Dickie Marshall, Owen Burton, Marita Baker, Milyika Carroll, Rene Kulitja, Mrs Doris Eaton and Evelyn Mitchell (Martu), Diana James (ANU), Margo Neale (NMA), June Ross (UNE), Mike Smith (NMA), Jane Dewing (SEWPaC), Howard Morphy (ANU), Andrew Sayers (NMA), Michelle Young (NPY Women’s Council), Wesley Enoch (Queensland Theatre Company), Helen Healy (Canberra100), Jo Foster (NPYWKC Tjanpi), Barbara Jackson (PY Media), Jodi Neale (ANU).

[A separate men’s meeting was held afterwards with late arrivals Shannon Lester and Mike Williams (Mimili).]
The Songlines Project Partners were introduced and the Project funding release announced. This was followed by an informal discussion of possible Kungkarangkalpa trips to Country.

Left to Right:
1. Women gather to speak about the Kungkarangkalpa songline at NPYWC Meeting, Cave Hill, 2012.
3. Rene Kulitja draws the Kungkarangkalpa songline through her country, from Wallara in the NT to SA.
4. Ronnie Douglas guides visitors around Cave Hill heritage site.
Ananguku Arts and the Songlines Project steering committee consulted with Yankunytjatjara elders of the Ngintaka line including Yami Lester during the 2008 – 2010 pre-project consultation across APY Lands.

The Songlines Project respected Yami Lester’s request that no research trips go onto Walatina Station.

Despite this agreement Yami Lester decided to publish further criticism of the Songlines Project in a press release on 7th May 2012, published in the Coober Pedy Times and later The Australian.

Yami Lester’s press release claimed that:

"The Ngintaka Creation journey is secret sacred men’s law and should not be recorded or be part of an exhibition."

Robert Stevens, a senior Ngintaka Traditional Owner and member of the Songlines Project Committee responded in a press release of 9th May 2012:

Anangu (Aboriginal people) on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands are excited about the Ngintaka Tjukurpa (Perentie Dreaming) project, part of the Alive with the Dreaming! Songlines of the Western Desert project. We have had discussions with nguraritja, Traditional Owners, about this project since 2008. We have had meetings with the APY Council, with Art Centres of the APY Lands, and the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council (NPYWC) who have all supported this project. It is a good project.

I support what Ananguku Arts with the Australian National University and other partners did when they put in the application for funding for this project. It is good that the partners have also put in some funds and support. Lately we have had a meeting at Amata community on the 16th of April 2012, where a lot of male and female Traditional Owners were present. They moved a resolution to support the project. On the 7th of May 2012 we had another meeting at Mimili community and male and female Traditional Owners from that area were there. They were happy and support the project as well.

Only people who are Traditional Owners of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa can speak about this, other community members cannot give advice about this project. I am the senior male Anangu traditional owner and consultant on this project and any talk about this project has to come through me. We want this to happen, we don’t want to go half way and then stop. Only the right people can talk about this.

Men’s business is separate, we are following the track telling the story that we all understand, men and women. Everyone tells this story to their grandsons and granddaughters so the Tjukurpa will still remain.

I think this project is very important, not only for Anangu people now but for the future, our kids and their kids.
Ngintaka Songline re-consultation Trip Across APY Lands, 2012

Ananguku Arts Board members with the Songlines steering committee met with all communities across APY Lands to discuss Yami Lester’s concerns and the negative press release. We were prepared to stop the Ngintaka Project if traditional owners were not happy. The response from all communities including Mimili was that the Ngintaka project and Exhibition should go ahead.

Mimili Ngintaka Songline Meeting, 2012

Participants: Karina Lester (chairwoman and translator), Shannon Kantji, Alec Baker, Marlene Brumby Mary Brumby, Jimmy Brumby, Ronnie Brumby, Milyika Carroll, Betty Campbell, Molly Cullinan, Robin Edwards, Teddy Edwards (dec), Kathlene Tjami, Huey Tjami (dec), Sadie Umula, Nyamu Whisky, Puna Yarima, Mary Mingkili, Peter Mungkun, Ngupalya, Willie Pompey, Betty Pumani, Ngupulya Margaret Pumani, Ken Pumani, Tjilpi Robin Kankapankatja (dec), Angela Robin, Kanjupayi Robin, Marita Baker, Josephine Mick, Diana James and Jodi Neale ANU.

Josephine Mick spoke to the Songlines Project. Translated by Karina Lester.

• The project is about those two stories Ngintaka and Kungkarangkalpa. The government has been seeing that Art and those stories being done and wanting to get it out, to help people put it down.

• At Angatja community people already did parts of the Ngintaka dance and made a CD. People are hearing about it, getting good feedback, good to get the songs and stories out. Anangu like to listen to them and show them to other people.

• People have been starting to paint the Ngintaka story across the Art Centres as well. These art works have been going into exhibitions and galleries. Some people purchase art of the Ngintaka story.

• EVTV at Pukatja was doing recordings at places like Fregon and Ernabella getting stories. A lot of stuff is archived there and in Ara Irititja about the Kungkarangkalpa and the Ngintaka stories.

• From that past is how it has grown to now, this project idea. From that is how the Western Desert Songlines Project grew. We sing songs, dances of these stories and want to record them for ourselves, Anangu and our future generations and to show to other people if we want to.
Kalka Meeting & Atarangu, 17-18 July 2013

We started with a meeting at Kalka of the Ngintaka Traditional Owners for the western Mann Ranges. The journey began at Atarangu, the Ngintaka man’s home, and then we travelled to specific sites along the Songline. Anangu Traditional Owners of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa from Atarangu in the west to Shirley Well in the east came on this trip. Family groups of grandparents, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren came together to visit their Country along the Ngintaka Songline.

120 Anangu: men, women and children from Kalka to Fregon on the APY Lands.

Right to Left:
1. Anangu with researchers Diana James and Mike Smith.
2. David Miller telling part of the Ngintaka story.
3. Atarangu, the home of Wati Ngintaka and his family in the west.
Recording at camp near Western Mann Ranges, 19-20 July 2013

Left to Right:
1. Milyika Paddy demonstrating the removal of seeds from wangunu naked wollybut (Eragrostis eriopoda) at Walytjatjata.
2&3. Milyaka Paddy grinding the wangunu seeds to make a seedcake paste for cooking in the hot sands under the coals of the fire.
4. Mike Smith working with Anangu to record the process of making a seed cake.

Anangu vision for trips to Country

"I was born at Arannga. I really know this Ngintaka Tjukurpa because I was born at his place. I heard this story when I was a child and I saw the Ngintaka Tjukurpa in land where we lived at Arannga. I’ve brought many people here and told them the story; now I’m sharing it with lots of people in this exhibition and book." Paniny Mick

1. Paniny Mick performing Inma near Mann Ranges.
3. Elizabeth Tregenza listening to the story of Wati Ngintaka.
"We teach as my mother taught me, and her mother and father taught her. The Law for the land, the Tjukurpa, the Dreaming and the Creation Law, has been kept in people’s heads and hearts and passed on through story and taking people into the land teaching them how to read the Land. This is what we do today, we take people in and tell them the Tjukurpa, we sing and dance, and we show them how to see it in the land, in the hills, in the rocks, in the waterholes and the trees, and the plants; it’s in everything. It makes people very happy; it makes their spirits open to the Land.” Leah Brady

Left to Right:
1. Janet Inyika teaching dance of Wati Ngintaka.
2. The inside of Ngintaka’s belly.
3. Leah Brady telling story of Ngintaka.
4. Sammy Miller as Ngintaka stands to be searched by his brothers.
5. Otis Watson dances the Ngintaka, crawling on his belly and making the salt lake Walan'nga.

Murputja School Workshop, 26 July 2013

The school kids drew pictures and worked with artist Jimmy Gilchrist to create an interactive multi-media installation for the Ngintaka Exhibition.

David Miller spoke on the importance of teaching the tradition to children:

"Wati Ngintaka is important for us. There are many rockholes, all the way to the West, where he made a camp. The songs tell us where he created a place and danced. We need to keep in touch with those places, so we can show our young people and they can carry the story on. My son can take the story from a certain point and show his son; my daughter can show her daughters. When they grow up they can show their family the same place they were taught by their grandfather and grandmother." David Miller

Green Screen Filming at Atol with Traditional Owners Sammy and Jonathon Lyons, 28 July 2013

Robert Stevens, the senior Traditional Owner for the Ngintaka Songline section from south of Irintata to the southern slopes of Mt Woodroffe, took his extended family to important sites and waterholes along the songline.

He guided men, women and children along the open pathway of the Ngintaka’s journey, making sure that no secret men’s sites or law was revealed to the family or recorded by researchers.

"Men's business is separate, we are following the track telling the story that we all understand, men and women. Everyone tells this story to their grandsons and granddaughters so the Tjukurpa will still remain. I think this project is very important, not only for Anangu people now but for the future, our kids and their kids." Robert Stevens
Ngintaka
29 March – 22 June 2014
South Australian Museum

A foundational songline, the Perentie Lizard Dreaming, told by Anangu Traditional Owners from the APY Lands in far north west South Australia, through a multi-layered exhibition combining song, story, dance, painting, carving, tjapli, audio and film.

South Australian Museum
North Terrace, Adelaide
www.samuseum.sa.gov.au
Museum in late backflip on Songline

TIM LLOYD
ARTS WRITER

AFTER 24 hours of high drama, the South Australian Museum reversed its decision to postpone the launch of a major Aboriginal exhibition – years in the making – and last night went ahead with the show.

The museum had been facing an embarrassing and potentially costly legal stand-off with the majority of the Anangu Pitiyanjarra Yankunytjatjara peoples of SA’s far north west, who wanted the event to go ahead.

The drama unfolded when the museum announced on Thursday night it had postponed the opening of the Ngintaka Songline exhibition until objections from another group of APY Lands elders were resolved.

By yesterday, dozens of APY Lands elders, who had travelled long distances for the opening, were demonstrating their solidarity and support for the exhibition in front of the museum on North Terrace.

The museum had cancelled the opening after receiving a letter from Berg Lawyers threatening an injunction.

But by not opening, the museum put itself in the legal crossfire, not just within traditional Anangu law, but also between two Adelaide law firms and the Crown Solicitor’s Office.

The Anangu were unanimous that the exhibition, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and developed over four years at a cost of $1 million, should go ahead.

They said the issues raised by the disaffected “so-called” APY Council of Elders about sacred secrets in the exhibition, and the use of new media to record traditional songlines, had been dealt with exhaustively over the years.

APY elder Frank Young explained the Ngintaka Songline was owned by many groups along the songline, which runs from Western Australia to South Australia. He said he didn’t think it was right that one small group along the songline should be able to stop its telling in an approved form.

Mr Young agreed it was part of a powerplay unfolding in the APY Lands.

“It’s being going on for years,” he said.

In a joint statement, the Anangu said the APY Council of Elders had no recognised role, and most of the men named in the debate had “no authority to speak for the Ngintaka songline.”
Ngintaka Exhibition, SA Museum 29 March - 22 June 2014

The Ngintaka Exhibition Opening was a huge success many people speaking from from APY Council, NPY Women’s Council, Ananguku Arts, the Songlines Project, ANU and the SA Museum.

David Miller, Chairman of Ananguku Arts and a senior Ngintaka Traditional Owner opened the exhibition;

"Ngura nganampa Tjukurpa pulkatjara, ngura wirunya nganana kanyintjaku. Our country is full of important Law and Culture, we are looking after beautiful country."

"What we are telling is an open story. It is for everyone, and it gives me much pleasure to be able to share this with people so they can see and know that we are a cultural people and, just like we are holding our freehold title, we hold our culture strongly for future generations."

Murray George, Chairman of the APY Law and Culture Committee, much to the delight of the assembled crowd lead the Angatja children’s’ dance troupe in a performance of part of the Ngintaka Inma.

Opening at S.A Museum
The vision of the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara elders was to pass on the story to their children and grandchildren and to create an opportunity for the wider community to gain an understanding of their culture.


This generation continues to teach the story, song and dance of the Ngintaka Tjukurpa:


1. David Miller in 2011, telling his grandchildren the Ngintaka story, “You may think this is just a creekbed, but it is the track of the giant euro who came through here with the Nyintjiri men chasing him. My grandfather was sitting up there, watching them …”. Photo Iain Morton, 2011.
Ceramic Ngintaka Purchased for the ANU Art Collection, 1 August 2014

Left to Right:
1. The Ngintaka sitting on display in the CASS Student Lounge in the Beryl Rawson Building.
2. Artists Tjutjuna Paul Andy, Ngunytjima Carroll, and Derek Thompson in the ANU Ceramics Workshop at the School of Art.
Seven Sisters INMA Workshop, Balfour’s Well, 11-18 Sept 2012

“This is a story that all people can hear and learn from, men, women and children.” Ivy Nganyinytja
Seven Sisters Rehearsal, NMA 26 Feb - 1 March 2013

The funds provided by ARTS SA, the SA Government for film editing and recording ensured that two young Indigenous film maker trainees from the APY Lands in South Australia were able to participate in the major Kungkarangkalpa performance at the National Museum of Australia in February 2013. This major event was also supported by the Centenary of Canberra and was performed over three nights on the shore of Lake Burley Griffin to capacity crowds.

Trainee Indigenous film makers, Kukika Edwards and Anne Thompson, both from Ernabella, travelled with the Seven Sisters Songlines cast of singers and dancers to Canberra. They were involved in on the job training with experienced film makers and recorded the rehearsal schedule that took place for the two weeks prior to the production, as well as filmed the performances in the evenings at the National Museum of Australia.

1. Seven Sisters C100 Canberra Performance team. Front L-R: Diana James, Niningka Lewis, Josephine Mick, Inawinytji Williamson, Jo Foster and Margo Neale.

Middle L-R: Tjunguru George, Illuwanti Ken, Nyurpaya Kaika, Mary Pan, Rene Kulitja, Nola Wongaway, Sally Scales, Tjunkaya Tapaya and Carlene Thompson.


Photo George Serras, NMA, 2013.

KUNGKARANGKALPA: SEVEN SISTERS SONGLINE

EXPERIENCE A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME PERFORMANCE OF AN ABORIGINAL DREAMING STORY!

The Kungkarangkalpa: Seven Sisters Songline is an epic story of the creation of earth and sky, and the Seven Sisters’ rise to become the mythical Pleiades, pursued forever across the night sky by the constellation of Orion. Hear the ancient chants of the Arrernte performers as the night sky and the Seven Sisters’ Songline symbolically connects the nation’s heart and mind. Traditional custodians from Central Australia will perform this amazing cultural event under the stars at the National Museum of Australia as part of the Centenary of Canberra celebrations in 2013.

8 PM 1 AND 2 MARCH OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATRE. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

COST: Adult $20 | Concession $15 | Child $10

TICKETS: Book online at ticketek.com.au, call 13 88 49, visit any Ticketek outlet or purchase at the door on the night.

Doors open at 7 pm. For more information including door prices, visit www.nma.gov.au/sevensisters

www.nma.gov.au

Free entry | Open 9am – 5pm daily (closed Christmas Day) | Abuse: 1800 649 419 | 02 6248 0200

www.ticketek.com.au | 02 6248 0200

The National Museum of Australia is an Australian Government Agency

Image: Dean Dibbins / Museums Victoria
Seven Sisters Performance, NMA, 1-2 March 2013

Left to Right:
1. Women seeking at Atila.
2. Nyiru & Seven Sisters at waterhole.
3. Wati Nyiru alone.
   Photos Wayne Quillam, 2013.
5. People watching a live stream performance at Warakurna Art Centre.
   LIVE STREAM.
   Photo Edwina Circuit, 2013.
   Photos courtesy of Songlines ARC Project, 2013.
Selling Yarns Conference, NMA, 26 Feb - 3 March 2013

Left to Right:
1. Tjanpi Seven Sisters.
2. Illawanti Ken, Nyurpaya Burton and Diana James.
3&4. Carlene Thompson teaching weaving at the NMA.

Photos courtesy of Tjanpi Weavers, 2013.
2014 ARCHEOLOGY:

Puntutjarpa Trip, 2014

Participants: June Ross, Mike Smith and Alan Williams in association with members of the Ngaanyatjarra Council and Warburton community, 2014.

The archaeological aspects of this research aimed to investigate:

1. the timing and structure of past settlement and lifeways in the Western Desert
2. the past role of seed grinding in APY Lands
3. the visual expressions of the Tjukurpa

Excavation and rock art recording at Warburton, Western Australia

We re-excavated the iconic desert site of Puntutjarpa, in the Browns Range near Warburton in 2014 in association with members of the Ngaanyatjarra Council and Warburton community. The aim of the project was to obtain a clearer understanding of the timing and use of the site in the past. Based on additional radiocarbon dates and OSL ages, as well as results of stone tool, soil particle size, pollen and phytolith analyses from the excavation, we concluded that Aboriginal people made brief visits to Puntutjarpa from around the terminal Pleistocene (10 000 years ago), with a period of intensive occupation during the mid-Holocene (8-5 000 years ago). This was followed by a period where there is little evidence of visitation until the last 1000 years or so when the site was again reoccupied.
Kuru Ala Kungkarangkalpa Film, 4-14 JULY 2014

1. Mr Leonard Walker telling the story of Seven Sisters to camera. Photo Claire Freer.
2. Mr Leonard Walker and Mr Robert Woods looking down at the waterhole where the Seven Sisters visit. Photo Emily Hungerford.
3. Eileen Lane making Seven Sisters Tjapiti. Photo Emily Hungerford.
5. Wati Nehru chasing the Seven Sisters through country. Photo Claire Freer.

Photos courtesy of Songlines ARC Project, 2014.
Kuru Ala Tjanpi Workshop, Blackstone, June 2015

Kungkarrangkalnga-ya Parrpakanu - Seven sisters are flying

In 2013 the National Museum of Australia and Tjanpi Desert Weavers decided that a major work was needed for the planned Seven Sisters Songlines exhibition scheduled for 2017 at the NMA. Papulankutja Tjanpi Desert Weavers wanted to create a major installation showing the Seven Sisters in flight for the first time. They would create these works at Kuru Ala where this episode of the story occurred when the sisters escaped the lustful pursuer Wati Nyiru by taking to the air. After the two week camp in June 2015 at Kuru Ala, where the Seven Sisters were created, sung and danced into being the weavers set up camp outside Papulankutja where the sculptures were completed. These challenging works are a testament to ladies commitment to the significance of this exhibition.

1. Workshop space at Kuru Ala with the Sisters emerging. Photo Dr Christiane Keller, 2015.

2. Nora Davidson and Anawari Mitchell working together to add the final details. Photo Dr Christiane Keller, 2015.

3. Jennifer Connelly is trialling the yipi. Photo Jo Foster, 2015.

4. The Sisters are flying! The sculptures were made in pairs Miriam Lane & Yayimpi Lewis; Jennifer Connelly & Mildred Lyons; Elaine & Janet Lane; Angilyiya Mitchell & Sokaway Lyons (big sister); Jennifer Mitchell & Belle Davidson; Anawari Mitchell & Nora Davidson; Janet Forbes & Freda Lane. Photo Annieka Skinner, 2015.
Martumili Minyipuru Film, Parnngurr, 27-8 October 2015

In October 2015 the Songlines ANU research team travelled with Martumili Artists to Parnngurr rockhole and camped at Georgie Bore visiting nearby Minyipuru sites. Kumbaya Girgaba, with other senior traditional custodians of the Minyipuru Seven Sisters, guided us along the Minyipuru songline and recorded the story on film. The Martu women tell the epic story of the Minyipuru Seven Sisters, their Creation Ancestors who travelled from the west coast of Australia near Roebourne across the Pilbara and Gibson Desert chased by the powerful magician Yula who desired the women. They cleverly escaped him many times on their eastward journey across the homelands of the Western Desert peoples of Australia. The Martu account of the Minyipuru travels ends here when the women fly east from Pangkapirni waterhole into Pintupi, Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara Country. The Seven Sisters are known by many different names and their story and song are sung in many different languages across Australia. The people of the land have continuously told, danced and sung this story around campfires for thousands of years keeping the Seven Sisters Songline alive as they watch the progress of the Sisters as the Pleiades traverse the southern night sky followed for eternity by the lusty hunter Orion.

Participants: Ngamaru Bidu, Kumpaya Girgirba, Nancy Nyanjilpayi Chapman, Jakayu Biljabu, Kumpaya Girgirba Bugai Whyoulter, Betty Whyoulter, Nancy Karnu Taylor and Nola Ngalangka Taylor

Left to Right:
1. Jakayu Biljabu & Kumpaya Girgirba.
Seven Sisters Exhibition, NMA, 2017-2018

1/ Muni Rita Simpson, Rosie Williams and Dulcie Gibbs. Martumili Artists. Acrylic on linen, 300 x 125 cm

TO BE CONTINUED...