



BUKU-LARRNGAY MULKA

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Artwork Information

Title/Theme Djulpan

Number 4351L

Medium Bark painting

Artwork Size 96 x30 cm

Created 2013

Artist Information

Artist Name Djakanju Yunupingu

Other Names Dorothy Marrayilyil

Born c. 1950

Clan Gumatj, Rrakpala

Moiety Yirritja

Homeland Biranybirany



Artwork Description

This artist is daughter of Mungarrawuy Yunupingu whose two sons Galarrwuy and Mandawuy have pursued the struggle for land rights he spearheaded until his death.

The Djulpan story is about seven sisters who went out in their canoe called djulpan. During September onwards, they go hunting and always come back with different types of food: turtles, fish and freshwater snakes, and also bush foods like yams and berries. They can be seen in the sky of a night, seven stars that come out together. Known in English as the Pleiades

The stars come in season when the food and berries come out, the stars will travel through the sky during that month until the season is over and they don't come out until the next season. Yunupingu's father told her about these seven sisters in a canoe, and the three brothers who came behind them, following them (Orion's belt). They travel west. There are special stars in the sky which Yolngu call wishing stars. They give Yolngu bush tucker; they multiply the foods in the sea – that's why Yolngu are happy to see them. That's what Yunupingu's father told her. The Djulpan make it to their home over the Northern horizon and then cook their food. The smoke from their fires is sometimes visible. This appears to be a reference to actual visibility of such extreme events in Irian Jaya as volcanoes, dust storms and severe bushfires. Smoke or dust from such rare events is also mirrored in certain cloud formations that appear after the Sisters have left the sky. It is only then that the Yolngu of this dimension can set their customary annual fires. If fires are lit before this the Djulpan will become sad and jealous and cry. Their tears in the form of unseasonal rain will extinguish the presumptuous fires.



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When she looks at the stars, Yunupingu thinks about the universe, all around, and about every tribe, every colour. In every corner of the world people can look up and see the stars. This is Yunupingu's vision – in her art, she focuses on the link between all people everywhere. The link between people on earth and stars in the sky – it's real. Yunupingu links this to the idea of garma, where people from everywhere and of all different groups come and relax, look up and see the stars.

The major proponent of this story in art history is Munggurawuy Yunupingu who painted it on bark frequently as above. He was a legendary artist and political leader and father to the seven sisters as well as two Australians of the Year- Galarrwuy and Mandawuy Yunupingu.