

Holmes à Court Gallery at Vasse Felix presents ...

# *Stardust Memories*

*myth, matter and memory*

5 February – 14 May 2017

According to physics.org we are all made of stardust. Almost every element on earth was formed at the heart of a star. No wonder that our bodies contain memories, nebulous though they may be, of the high-energy environment that created the various elements that earth and ourselves are made of.

Penny Bovell's works reflect just this in the changing configurations of the freckles on her back, recorded over a period of twenty-six years. Delicate and evocative, these prints on rag paper on aluminium mirror the flux in constellations we see in the night skies.

Tony Nathan's two photo works show the reality of two constellations in depth. The reality is complex and wonderful. No need really to wax lyrical. Miik Green's mixed media on aluminium works have captured moments of chemical reactions under their resin surfaces. Presenting like starbursts, in the context of this exhibition, and taking poetic license, they seem to record the movement of matter from the skies to the earth.

The collection works reflect our gaze to the night skies over millennia and what we imagine is there above us. It must be more... and supernatural. Ancient stories reside there. Heaven is likely to be there... where else?

Residing under this beautiful canopy there are surely endless possibilities for us here on earth. We look to the skies and we reach for the skies. We look to the stars for guidance in an effort to make sense of our world and our presence here.

## Janet Holmes à Court Collection Artworks

**Vicki Cullinan, *Kilipi unngu Munga Ilkari (Stars in the Night Sky)*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 167 x 243 cm**

Vicki's painting is evocative of the desert night sky brimming with stars. From her home at Indulkana on the APY lands, the night sky is loaded with many southern hemisphere star constellations, the beautiful Milky Way, shooting stars, the bright moon and distant planets.

As if observing the night sky through fast motion film, Vicki's paintings capture the movement and energy of star formations, the changes in shifting light and the powerful beauty of the solar system.

**Janenne Eaton, *The Heaven Painting*, 1990, oil on canvas, 231 x 174.5 cm**

**Bevan (Pooaraar) Hayward, *Yam 'Dreamtime' Essence of Life*, 1987, screenprint, 39 x 33 cm**

**Maureen Hudson Nampitjinpa, *Seven Sisters*, 2012, acrylic on canvas, 96 x 138 cm**

The seven sisters travelled over a vast expanse of country, until they discovered they were being pursued by a man called Wati - Nyiru. He was a devious person who wanted to seduce the sisters and have ownership of them. The women were terrified of Wati - Nyiru but could not escape his advances no matter how hard they tried. In desperation they were aided in their escape and alighted into the sky, forming part of the Milky Way known as the Pleiades constellation. There they are safe and can watch over all the women on Earth. Wati - Nyiru followed them into the heavens, and became the star Orion, unable to get near them as they move across the night sky. *(Story courtesy of Artija Fine Art)*

**Naminapu Maymuru-White, *Milngiyawuy*, 2005, earth pigments on bark, 202 x 49 cm**

This painting depicts the cycle of the Manggalili clan spirit that lies within the Milngiyawuy River - a reflection of the Milky Way. In ancestral times Munuminya and Yikawanga instructed the Guwak (koel cuckoo) men to lead the Manggalili people to the new place they had established for them at Djarrakpi.

Once the people were settled in their new homeland they announced to the Manggalili that they were to travel out to sea, to a place in the night sky where they would become stars.

Their journey began by paddling a canoe down the Milngiyawuy River. Strong winds developed in the bay and a wake from the ancestral turtle capsized the canoe, drowning the men. The men had destined themselves as offerings to the night sky where they and subsequent Manggalili souls are seen today in the Milky Way.

The artist says of her work:

*"I have brought these paintings to you because I want to show and share with non-Aboriginal people and all of our young people. This is not my hobby but my identity and my foundation."*

**Matthew McVeigh, *Expansion under the stars*, 2016, laser cut and etched acrylic, gold paint, 129 x 66 cm**

This work was made in collaboration with Jess Tran.

**Norah Napaljarri Nelson, *Seven Sisters Dreaming*, 1989, synthetic polymer on canvas, 130 x 197 cm**

This Dreaming travels from Purpurla to Yanipirlangu and on to Kunatjarrayi. The Napaljarri women (cluster of seven stars in constellation Taurus known as Pleiades) are being pursued by a Jakamarra man (the Morning Star in Orion's Belt). The story ends when the women in a final attempt to escape Jakamarra, turn into fire at Kurlunyalimpa and ascend to the heavens to become stars.

**Alma Nungarrayi Granites, *Yanjirpirri or Napaljarri-warnu Jukurrpa (Star or Seven Sisters Dreaming)*, 2011, acrylic on linen, diptych, 91 x 91 cm each**

**Alma Nungarrayi Granites, *Yanjirpirri or Napaljarri-warnu Jukurrpa (Star or Seven Sisters Dreaming)*, 2011, acrylic on linen, 122 x 122 cm**

The Napaljarri-warnu Jukurrpa (Seven Sisters Dreaming) depicts the story of the ancestral Napaljarri sisters who are found in the night sky today in the cluster of seven stars, commonly known as the Pleiades, in the constellation Taurus. The Pleiades are seven women of the Napaljarri skin group, and are often depicted in paintings of this Jukurrpa carrying the Jampijinpa man Wardilyka (the bush turkey, *Ardeotis australias*) who is in love with the Napaljarri-warnu and who represents the Orion's Belt cluster of stars.

Jukurra-jukurra, the Morning Star, is a Jakamarra man who is also in love with the seven Napaljarri sisters and is often shown chasing them across the night sky. In a final attempt to escape from the Jakamarra, the Napaljarri-warnu turned into fire and ascended to the heavens to become stars. The custodians of the Napaljarri-warnu Jukurrpa are Japaljarri/Jungarrayi men and Papaljarri/Nungarrayi women. Some parts of the Napaljarri-warnu Jukurrpa are closely associated with men's sacred ceremonies.

In the Yanjirpirri Jukurrpa (Star Dreaming) the ceremony tells of the journey of Japaljarri and Jungarrayi men who travelled from Kurlungalinypa (near Lajamanu) to Yanjirlypirri (west of Yuendumu) and then on to Lake Mackay on the West Australian border. Along the way they performed Kurdiji (initiation ceremonies) for young men. Women also danced for the Kurdiji. The site depicted in these paintings is Yanjirlypirri (star) where there is a low hill and a water soakage. The importance of this place cannot be overemphasised as young boys are brought here to be initiated from as far as Pitjanjatjara country to the south and Lajamanu to the north.

In contemporary Walpari paintings traditional iconography is used to represent the Jukurrpa, associated sites and other elements. Often depicted in paintings for this jukurrpa is the female star Yantarlarangi (Venus – the Evening star) who also chases the Napaljarri sisters for having stolen the night from her. (*Story courtesy Japingka Gallery*)

**Leon Pericles, *Earth II*, 1980, etching and collage, 58 x 45 cm**

**David Rankin, *River of Stars – Lake Mungo Nocturne*, 1987, oil on canvas, 240 x 585 cm**

**Gulumbu Yunupingu, *Gan'yu*, 2005, earth pigment on bark, 220 x 63 cm**

Gan'yu is the Yolngu word for stars. Some gan'yu are special for Yolngu and are regarded as wishing stars. This painting loosely refers to two Dreamtime stories, which each represent different constellations.

The first story tells of two sisters. Guthayguthay is the elder sister and sits at the biggest fire. Nhayay is the younger sister and has a smaller fire. These sisters were once humans but they turned into stars that sit under the Milky Way.

When the seasons are hot the two sisters are arguing and sitting apart with different fires. When the seasons are cooler the two sisters are seen together sitting by one big fire. When sitting together, more stars surround the sisters. When you look in the sky you will see two women figures sitting near two bright stars, which are their fires burning.

The second story refers to seven sisters as they travel west in their canoe. During certain seasons they go hunting and return with many different types of food. The sisters can be seen in the night sky as seven stars that come out together (Pleiades or the Seven Sisters). Every year the stars return when food and berries are plentiful. They move through the sky until the season ends.

The work focuses on this link between all people on earth - every tribe, every colour and the stars in the sky. People from everywhere can come and relax, look up and see stars.

### **Invited Artists**

**Penny Bovell**

***Aurora I*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 136 x 157 x 3.2 cm**

***Aurora II*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 136 x 157 x 3.2 cm**

***Cosmos Back # 1*, 2014, inkjet print on rag paper on aluminium, (ed.1 of 10), 60 x 83 cm**

***Cosmos Back # 2*, 2014, inkjet print on rag paper on aluminium, (ed.1 of 10), 60 x 83 cm**

***Cosmos and Backs # 1982, 1997 & 2014*, 2014, inkjet print on rag paper on aluminium, (ed. 1 of 10), 28.5 x 39.5 cm**

The artist says of her *Cosmos and Backs* series:

*Intermittently since 1982 I have engaged somebody to take a photograph of the freckles on my back. I always imagine these to be the stars scattered across the sky and I play at finding connections between the ageing freckles. Formed deep under the skin the spots slowly surface and are eventually worn away, leaving room for newer spots to emerge. They move from dark to light, vary in intensity and have some rosy pinkness.*

## Miik Green

*xylem series - Haplostele38*, 2016, mixed media on aluminium, 185 x 185cm

*xylem series - Haplostele44*, 2016, mixed media on aluminium, 185 x 185cm

*xylem series – Velorum*, 2014, mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm

*xylem series - Excelsa11*, 2013, mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm

*xylem series - Hoescht10*, 2013, mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm

*xylem series - Meiosis6*, 2013, mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm

*xylem series - Velorum2*, 2014, mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm

*xylem series - Meiosis4*, 2014, mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm

These works are a selection from Miik Green's xylem series:

*The works draw from cell-staining techniques and biological pigmentation, where colour can define abnormalities or infection. In the biological sciences, colour is often strikingly evident and can be used to identify, map, trace and visualise cells and cell components under a microscope. In a similar manner, Green injects, drags and extracts liquid materials, pigments and chemicals, yet allows the paintings to evolve independently of his hand.* (Linton and Kay Galleries [www.lintonandkay.com.au](http://www.lintonandkay.com.au)).

## Tony Nathan

***Constellations III, and IV*, 2010, ed. 2 of 5, archival prints on aluminium, (set of two)  
104 x 104 cm each**

These images were made remotely by using a 17 inch Dall Kirkham telescope in South Alpen, France via the internet. *Messier 9* is an object on the Messier list compiled by Charles Messier a comet hunter in the 18th century, His frustration at repeatedly encountering things which he thought were comets resulted in him publishing a list of nuisance objects. M9 is a globular cluster in the Ophiuchus constellation approximately 26,000 light years distance. This work is an extension of the Constellation series Nathan began in 2004.

Tony Nathan has been a commercial and fashion photographer for 26 years and an arts practitioner for sixteen years. He has exhibited in Japan and Holland and has exhibited in several shows in Australia including *Night Vision* at the Australian centre for photography, *Clouded Over* at the Lawrence Wilson Gallery, *Proof of Light* at PICA and *Mix Tape* at the Art gallery of Western Australia. Tony and his family have recently moved to Holland. He continues to manage the publication of Circuit magazine. [studio-oppa.nl](http://studio-oppa.nl)

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