

Women's Collaborative (Tjungkara Ken, Yaritji Young, Freda Brady, Maringka Tunkin, and Sandra Ken)

Pitjantjatjara language group
Apy Lands, Southern Australia

Seven Sisters

2016

Acrylic on linen

Collection of Martha Hesse Dolan and Robert E. Dolan

Tjungkara Ken, Yaritji Young, Freda Brady, Maringka Tunkin, and Sandra Ken have collaborated to depict the Seven Sisters Story—a Tjukurpa Story (Creation Story) about the constellations of Pleiades and Orion. The sisters are the constellation of Pleiades and the other star, Orion, is Nyiru, a bad or lusty man. Nyiru is forever chasing the sisters with the hope of marrying the eldest sister.

The seven sisters travel repeatedly from sky to earth in order to escape Nyiru's unwanted attentions. They also transform into their human form to escape the persistent Nyiru, but he always finds them, and the sisters flee back to the sky. As Nyiru is chasing the sisters, he tries to catch them by using magic to turn himself into the most tempting bush tomatoes for the sisters to eat, and the most beautiful fig tree for them to camp under. However, the sisters are too clever for Nyiru and outwit him as they are knowledgeable about his magic. They go hungry, and run through the night rather than be caught by Nyiru. From time to time, one of the sisters fall victim to his ways. It is said that he eventually captures the youngest sister, but with the help of the oldest sister, she escapes back to her sisters who are waiting for her. Eventually the sisters fly back into the sky to escape Nyiru, thus reforming the constellation.

