

Emily Kame Kngwarreye



Cultural Frame

This is Kngwarreye's first painting on canvas, *Emu Woman*, 1988-1989. The lines and mark-making seen in this work mimic her prior experience in painting on the body for rituals and dance in honor of the Emu ancestor. The 'dotting' technique refers to plants and seeds, which belong to Kngwarreye's Dreaming.

Vocabulary

Aboriginal Australian: People whose ancestors are native to Australia.

The Dreaming: A spiritual story owned by an Aboriginal Australian tribe that explains the creation of life. This term has unique meanings for different Aboriginal groups.

Animism: (soul, life) the belief that animals, plants, and often, inanimate objects or phenomena possess spirits.

Abstract Art: Art that simplifies the appearance of an object to varying degrees.

Realism: Art that attempts to accurately depict reality.

HISTORICAL STUDY

Emily Kame Kngwarreye was one of the most significant female, contemporary, Indigenous artists from Australia. She grew up in a remote part of the Australian desert, near an area called Utopia, in her clan country, Alhalkere. She did not start painting on canvas until she was 70 years old, and in her short 8 years of painting, she rapidly produced over 3,000 works of art. In her work, she focused primarily on the process of painting, which served as a spiritual act to connect to her ancestors. In her paintings, Emily is responding to her natural surroundings, the land, plants, animals, and seasonal changes, and the complex way in which they are all connected to each other. Throughout her life, she practiced the art of body painting for Awelye rituals, and she worked with Batik techniques, as well. Awelye rituals are ceremonies of her tribe, specifically for women that involve singing and dancing.

Awelye, 1989

90 x 60cm



Structural Frame

Does this painting have a background, middle ground, or foreground?

Cultural Frame

About her work, Emily said, “That’s what I paint: whole lot.”

Based on what you just read about the artist’s process and culture, what do you think this quote means?



Big Yam, 1996

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 159 x 270cm



Structural Frame

What natural material does this painting remind you of?

Cultural Frame

Why do you think the yam was so important to Emily Kngwarreye?

Artist Comparisons

Mark Dixon

Untitled

How does this painting compare and contrast to Emily's work?



Richard Dunlop

The Persistence of Memory I (Small Town Memorial)

Compare and contrast this painting to Emily's work.



FURTHER RESEARCH

What impact did Emily Kame Kngwarreye have on Aboriginal art?

MAKING ART

Structural Frame

Create a plan or aerial view of your school and its surroundings. Use symbols and patterns to represent different objects, materials and vegetation.

Untitled (Awelye), 1994

190 x 56.7cm



Structural Frame

How does this painting differ from the previous ones?

Resources

<http://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/Kngwarreye/teachers.htm>

http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/utopia_the_genius_of_emily_kame_kngwarreye/origins

<http://netsvictoria.org.au/emily-kame-kngwarreye/>

<http://nga.gov.au/exhibitions/Kngwarreye/>

http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/utopia_the_genius_of_emily_kame_kngwarreye/emily_kame_kngwarreye

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Kame_Kngwarreye

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreaming_%28spirituality%29

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animist>