

MEDIA RELEASE

27/8/26

EVERYWHEN ART

Booth E04

Sydney Contemporary Art Fair 2026

WHERE WATERS CARRY STORIES

Janet Dreamer • Janice Stanley

Melanie Koolmatrie • Susan Peters Wangamirr Nampitjin

Mornington Peninsula-based Everywhen Art's curated Sydney Contemporary 2026 presentation is titled *Where Waters Carry Stories* and brings together the work of South Australian artists South Melanie Koolmatrie and Janice Stanley with that of East Kimberley artists Susan Peters Wangamirr Nampitjin and Janet Dreamer.

From the striking pink lakes of Meningie in South Australia to the shimmering salt lakes near Uluru, from the winding waterways that flow into the vast inland lake of Paruku (Lake Gregory) to the wildlife-rich rivers of the East Kimberley, the distinctly individual works of these four artists are united by their deeply personal interpretations of the rivers, lakes, salt pans, wetlands and oceans that shape their ancestral landscapes. Through their distinct visions, these waterways emerge not only as geographical features, but as living cultural landscapes that embody memory, identity and enduring connections to Country.

“Each of these highly talented artists - three of whom are showing in Sydney for the first time - has an abiding relationship with the water sites of their Countries,” says Everywhen Arts co-director Susan McCulloch. “Their striking, lyrical paintings invite us into these landscapes, inspiring us to appreciate more deeply, these places of profound cultural and ecological significance.”

ARTISTS EVENTS at EVERYWHEN ART, BOOTH E04

Saturday September 5, 11.30am-12.30 pm MEET THE ARTIST

Meet artist Janice Stanley and Ernabella Arts manager, Rowena Withers.

Saturday September 5, 3-5 pm. IN CONVERSATION

Artist Melanie Koolmatrie with gallery directors Susan McCulloch OAM and Emily McCulloch Childs.

About the artists

Janice Stanley

Language: Pitjantjatjara

b. 1987

Third generation Ernabella painter Janice Stanley's innovative paintings depict a large Pantu (Salt Lake) near Attila (Mt Connor), a significant site of the Seven Sisters story. Here, on their travels south, the sisters create landforms in their wake. Imagining their journeys from an aerial perspective, Stanley's luminous paintings with their tracery of fine white lines, capture the colours of the salt pan when water flows over it after rain. Janice Stanley's work is in the collections of Australian Parliament House, Janet Holmes a Court, Australian Embassy, Zagreb.

Melanie Koolmatrie

Language; Ngarrindjeri, Peramangk, Ramindjeri

b. 1986

A member of the famed Koolmatrie art family of the Coorong, emerging visual artist and contemporary dancer Melanie Koolmatrie creates colour-drenched paintings of movement and depth, inspired by the meeting of South Australia's Lake Albert and the pink salt lakes near Meningie. Rich in luminous pinks and blues, these evocative works depict a landscape of profound cultural history, where an ancient Ngarrindjeri battlefield intersects with a sacred songline that travels through the Coorong to the Southern Ocean. Melanie Koolmatrie is studying for a visual arts degree at Flinders University, SA and has participated in group exhibitions in Adelaide.

This is Melanie Koolmatrie's first showing in Sydney.

Susan Peters Wangamirr Nampitjin

Language: Walmajarri, Ngarti

b. 1963

Born at Argyle Downs Station in the East Kimberley, Susan Peters Wangamirr Nampitjin moved to Queensland with her family after their Country was flooded by the creation of Lake Argyle as part of the Ord River Scheme in the late 1960s. After establishing herself as an artist in Queensland, she has now returned permanently to the East Kimberley.

The water places of her family's ancestral Country lie at the heart of her sophisticated, fluid paintings, Central to her work is the vast inland lake Paruku (Lake Gregory), renowned for its rich birdlife, together with the network of waterways that feed it and the plants they sustain. For Peters, her art is "a personal reflection of family, Country, community, oral histories..." Susan Peters Wangamirr Nampitjin's work is in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia and Artbank. In 2021 she won the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair award for innovation. This is Susan Peters first showing in Sydney.

Janet Dreamer

Language Jaru

1959-2021

In brilliant colour and exuberant imagery, the vibrant canvases of Jaru artist Janet Dreamer (1959–2021) celebrate the flora, wildlife and waterways of her East Kimberley Country. Blending figuration and abstraction, Dreamer drew inspiration from her birthplace of Old Flora Valley Station, the lush oasis of nearby Palm Springs and the rich natural and cultural landscape she encountered on the many journeys she called "walkabout". Her paintings honour the region's abundant birdlife, animals and plants, while also evoking its creation ancestors and the enduring cultural significance of these places. Mrs Dreamer's works are in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia; however, she passed away before her work could be accorded the full recognition it deserved. It is now being exhibited in Sydney for the first time.

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