

## AUDIO DESCRIPTION

### *Stolen Children*



Sandra Saunders, *Stolen Children*, 2001, synthetic polymer paint on composition board. Gift of Felicity Wright. Collection of Flinders University Museum of Art 4472

This is an audio description of an artwork by Sandra Saunders, titled *Stolen Children*.

Sandra Saunders is a Ngarrindjeri and Boandik artist, born in 1947.

Painted in 2001, *Stolen Children* measures approximately 66 and a half centimetres high by 47 centimetres wide and is made with synthetic polymer paint on composition board. It is vertically oriented with a simple and tightly focused composition. Three figures occupy most of the picture plane, set against a flat, muted olive-green background.

On the left stands an adult figure with pale skin and short-cropped bright yellow hair. The figure is shown in profile, with their face turned away from the viewer so that no facial features are visible. They wear a dark navy-blue garment with long sleeves. Bright yellow brushstrokes at the shoulders and cuffs suggest the insignia or trim of an official

uniform. The figure's anonymity evokes institutional authority rather than individual identity.

On the right is a dark-skinned woman wearing a vivid red dress. She cradles a small infant close to her body. Her long dark hair frames her face, and her expression conveys profound sadness. Her red lips are painted into a deep frown, while short white brushstrokes running down her cheeks suggest tears.

Between the two adults is an infant. The child shares the same dark skin tones as the woman, reinforcing their familial connection. The infant is unclothed except for a necklace depicted as a string of small red dots, echoing the colour of the woman's dress. Like the woman, the child wears a sorrowful expression, with downturned features and white brush marks indicating tears.

The emotional force of the painting lies in the relationship between the figures.

The pale-skinned figure leans slightly toward the child, arms extended, suggesting an act of removal or transfer. The woman's gaze is directed toward this official figure, while the infant looks back toward the woman. Together, these intersecting lines of sight create a tense triangular exchange that speaks of separation, loss and powerlessness.

*Stolen Children* is a deeply emotional work. It reflects on the trauma caused by the Australian government's forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, today known as the Stolen Generations.

Saunders employs simplified forms, expressive brushwork and a restrained palette to focus attention on the human experience at the centre of the work. The painting stands as a powerful reflection on grief, displacement and enduring cultural resilience.