

AUDIO DESCRIPTION | SELMA NUNAY COULTHARD

This audio file describes the artwork *Urrampinyi (Tempe Downs), West of Alice Springs, NT*, created by Selma Nunay Coulthard.

Selma Nunay Coulthard is an Arrernte, Luritja and Western Aranda artist, born in 1954.

Made in 2023, this vertically oriented work measures 60 centimetres high by 45 centimetres wide. It was made using watercolour pigment painted directly onto a repurposed aluminium road sign.

Overall, the work depicts the desert Country of Urrampinyi, or Tempe Downs. It combines a softly painted landscape with the retained graphic elements of the original sign. Muted blues, pinks, reds and greens are layered over bright red, orange, yellow, black and white safety markings. They create a striking contrast between the natural scene and the industrial warning symbols.

The weathered aluminium forms the painting's surface. It is scratched, bent and dented, showing traces of its use. Several bullet holes puncture the metal and the painted image.

In the top third of the composition, a large red oval containing the word "DANGER" in white capital letters dominates the soft grey sky. Below and to the left, an orange panel with bold, black lettering reads "HIGH GAS BURIED". The words sit against pale blue mountain ranges and layered pink and red escarpments.

At the centre, a black and orange triangular symbol depicts exploding rock. It interrupts the surrounding vista and is perforated by a bullet hole. Soft pink and green washes form gently rolling hills surrounding the triangle. The hillsides are dotted with shrubs.

In the lower left, the words "RISK" and "EMERGENCY" are also retained. "RISK" appears in black lettering on an orange background, while "EMERGENCY" is written in red letters on a white background. Both sit amongst a winding creek and shallow waterhole flowing through rich red earth in the foreground.

Coulthard's fine brushwork and transparent watercolour washes create a soft, luminous appearance to the whole landscape. This contrasts with the hard, warped metal beneath, and the bold warning symbols retained from the road sign's former life.