

Media Release

October 2025

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together)



Barkandji/Barkindji artists share travels together on
Country in a new exhibition

Flinders University Museum of Art

7 October – 28 November 2025

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together) is a fresh and vibrant exhibition that brings together six Barkandji/Barkindji artists, Nici Cumpston, Zena Cumpston, David Doyle, Kent Morris, Adrianne Semmens, and Raymond Zada, exploring and illuminating the artists' homelands and Ancestral connection through newly commissioned works.

Featuring more than 50 works of art by contemporary First Nations artists and creators, *ngaratya* is a contemporary capsule of stories, memories and conversations as shown through sculpture, prints, moving image, photography, writing, and design.



Barkandji curator and photographer Nici Cumpston OAM and her sister, writer, researcher, and storyteller Zena Cumpston have worked together to co-curate, as well as make their own works as part of this collective exhibition. They bring together Barkindji/Malyangapa carver, educator, and poet David Doyle; Barkindji photographer Kent Morris; Barkandji performer, dance maker and educator Adrienne Semmens; and Barkandji multi-media artist and broadcaster Raymond Zada.

Sharing their journey and story in curating this exhibition, Nici and Zena Cumpston said: "This exhibition is an exercise in custodial responsibility – we are sharing these stories to introduce people to our Country. This is an opportunity to learn about and to celebrate our homelands, so we can together, be a part of the solutions needed to keep people and Country healthy."

The six artists spent time travelling together on Country, engaging with cultural landscapes, their Elders, community, and each other, resulting in a rich, immersive installation that comes straight from the heart. This exhibition offers a dynamic portal into Country and connection.

Nici and Zena Cumpston explain: "Being together on our Barkandji/Barkindji Country gave each of us precious time to strengthen and build our knowledge, our cultural connection and especially to deepen our relationships with each other and our Barkandji/Barkindji community. Each of the artists have made work that conveys their love and passion for our people, for our Ancestors, for our culture, for our Country."

In her 2023 exhibition review, ArtsHub's National Visual Arts Editor Gina Fairley echoed the exhibitions offering and said *ngaratya* "is a reminder that to welcome – and feel welcomed – is part of the cultural protocols shared by these artists."

Barkandji/Barkindji are the people of the Baaka (Darling River), culturally responsible for the waterway and vast Country spanning more than 100,000 square kilometres across western New South Wales.



The narratives explored by the artists are shared with joy and passion. Whilst this Country and its people have suffered through the ongoing pressures of colonisation, *ngaratya* (*together, us group, all in it together*), is ultimately a journey of love, empowerment, respect, and connection.

Collectively the works speak to many diverse stories of Barkandji/Barkindji people and culture: the plight of the Baaka (Darling River), waterways as our lifeblood, Ancestral connection, Indigenous plant use, deep knowledge of Country and innovation, bloodlines, cultural continuance, belonging and intergenerational learning.

Works in a variety of mediums are presented in this exhibition including carving, bronze casting, weaving, stringmaking, linocuts, etched acrylic, hand-coloured photographs, photographic installations, moving image, screendance and soundscapes.

Explore the digital catalogue: ngaratya.com.au

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nici Cumpston travels along the backwaters and inland lakes of the Murray Darling basin to create large-scale hand-coloured black and white photographs. Through these works she shares stories of ongoing Aboriginal occupation of this land. By visiting new sites alongside the other artists, she has developed a new series of photographs. Her expertise as a curator is guiding and supporting the artists to develop their ideas and present dynamic new artistic commissions for the exhibition.

Zena Cumpston is a writer, storyteller, and researcher and will present her artistic practice publicly for the first time as part of this exhibition. Zena's work centres around her interest in plant knowledge. Through her multi-disciplinary storytelling she illuminates the innovation of her people, shining a light on the ways Aboriginal peoples have used plants for nutrition, technologies, and medicines over many thousands of generations.

David Doyle is a carver, poet and educator creating works of art across a diverse range of media. His ongoing research into traditional methods of harvesting and processing traditional food sources provides great inspiration for his visual arts practice.

Kent Morris creates photographs, photographic installations and moving image works that reconstruct the built environment to reveal the continuing presence and patterns of Aboriginal history, of culture and knowledge embedded in the contemporary Australian landscape, despite ongoing colonial interventions in the physical and political environments.

Adrianne Semmens is a dance practitioner with experience working across the arts, education, and community sectors. In her multi-disciplinary practice, she explores identity and connection to place that is enabled through embodied movement and text.

Raymond Zada is a visual artist working primarily with photography, printmaking, video, and digital design. Through innovative techniques he examines and presents the complexities of Australian history and the disconnect between language and reality.

ngaratya (together, us group, all in it together) is a Bunjil Place Gallery exhibition, curated by Nici Cumpston and Zena Cumpston, touring with NETS Victoria.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program, as well as receiving assistance from NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund, supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

The project's co-curator and participating artist Nici Cumpston is also Artistic Director of Tarnanthi at the Art Gallery of South Australia. AGSA has included *ngaratya* in Tarnanthi 2025 because of its artistic merit as a significant collective Barkandji/Barkindji project.

Images from top:

Nici Cumpston

Old Mutawintji Gorge I, from the series mirrimpilyi, happy and contented, 2023

pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper, hand coloured with PanPastel, crayon and pencil
44 x 120 cm

Courtesy the artist and Michael Reid Gallery

Photo: Michael Haines

Kent Morris

karta-kartaka (pink cockatoo) #2, 2023

inkjet print on Moab Somerset Museum Rag paper 100 x 150 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery

Zena Cumpston

ngarta-kiira (to return to Country) #3, 2023

linocut collage and kopi on Fabriano paper
76 x 56 cm

Courtesy the artist

Photo: Christian Capurro

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Available to interview:

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- Zena Cumpston: cumpstonzena@gmail.com
- Other artists upon request

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National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, by the Australian Government through the Creative Australia, its arts funding and advisory body, and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. NETS Victoria also receives significant in-kind support from the National Gallery of Victoria.

Presented as part of Tarnanthi

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