



### Collective Memory

For millennia, Australian Aboriginal people have expressed ancient stories, or Dreamings, through body painting, dance, and other ephemeral art forms. Emily Kame Kngwarreye (pronounced koom-WAH-ree) is among the first generation to render these tales in permanent materials.



## Yam Story '96, 1996

### Take a closer look

**Emily Kame Kngwarreye (ca. 1910–1996)** earned international acclaim for her bold compositions, handling of paint, and use of color. Here, intertwined lines set against a dark background suggest the aggressive, subterranean root system of the desert yam.

### Something to talk about

In addition to providing practical information about the landscape, Dreamings offer lessons in moral behavior. Many cultures use historical, religious, and imagined tales similarly. What stories do you know that present such lessons?

### Who knew?

Dreamings are passed down within families. The custodians who inherit a story are the only ones who can represent it. Viewers outside the clan may recognize the narrative, but will never know its full meaning. Kngwarreye was custodian of the Yam Dreaming.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Yam Story '96*, 1996; Acrylic on canvas, 47 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 36 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of the Collection of Margaret Levi and Robert Kaplan; © Emily Kame Kngwarreye/Copyright Agency. Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, [2023]

