

Orion & the Pleiades

1985.0067.0041



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Description

The Constellation of Orion and the Pleiades

Orion and the Pleiades are linked in the astronomical myths. More often than not, Orion is a man or group of men, and the Pleiades their wives. This is the belief of the aborigines of Groote Eylandt. The major stars in the constellation of Orion are three fishermen, the Burum-burum-runja, and the Pleiades, their wives, the Wutarinja. Three of the bark paintings illustrate this myth.

In PI. 151E [1985.0067.0041] the fishermen, Burum-burum-runja, are the three stars (Orion's belt) in the rectangle, and the smaller dots, their children. The extension (Orion's sword) in the lower left-hand corner symbolizes the line of fish the celestial fishermen caught in the creek, ataluma (Milky Way). The dots within the circle on the lower right are the wives, Wutarinja (the Pleiades) (Mountford, 1956, 482).

Physical description

Bark painting, made from ochres on bark, Depicts two constellations: one is rectangular with a diagonal "handle" from the top right corner, painted red with yellow and white dots and three white stars diagonally across the centre; the second, to the left of the first, is a red circle decorated with red dashes and white dots. Both are on a black background.

Object information

 What

Type [Bark paintings](#)

Collection [American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land \(AASEAL\) c...](#)

Dimensions L 730mm x W 343mm x H 16mm

Material [Bark](#),
[Pigment](#),
[Wood](#)

 When

Date created [/04/1948-/11/1948](#)
[06/05/1948-08/05/1948](#)
Bark & Mountfor's notes have slightly different dates

 Who

Artist [Mr Charles P. Mountford](#)
[Minimini Numalkiyiya Mamarika](#)
Verified by D Kaus 23/10/2012

 Where

Place created [Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, Australia](#) 
[Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, Australia](#) [Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia](#)

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