The SKA Organisation is bringing you its 2015 calendar, which this year highlights an original and unique project we are particularly proud of, namely the Shared Sky art-astronomy exhibition.

Shared Sky brings together Australian and South African artists in a collaborative exhibition celebrating humanity’s ancient cultural wisdom, alongside one of the world’s greatest scientific and engineering endeavours: the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope project.

Yamaji and other Aboriginal artists from the Mid West region of Western Australia and African artists of San descent and others from the central Karoo region of South Africa’s Northern and Eastern Cape have created artworks in response to ancestral stories about the night sky – a sky they both share as it appears above their traditional homelands.

These sparsely populated and remote areas were specifically chosen for their radio-quietness and relative emptiness, making them the perfect sites to co-develop the world’s largest radio telescope – the Square Kilometre Array – itself a collaboration between governments, scientists and engineers from around the world.

Shared Sky was curated by the John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University and developed in collaboration with Yamaji Art Centre, Geraldton, Western Australia and the First People Centre at the Bethesda Arts Centre, Nieu Bethesda, Eastern Cape, South Africa. It is presented by the international SKA Organisation, Manchester UK; SKA South Africa, Johannesburg; SKA Australia, Canberra in collaboration with Curtin University’s Institute for Radio Astronomy, Perth, Australia.

Right: Shared Sky exhibition launch at John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University, Perth, Australia, 30 September 2014.

**Front cover image:** Composite image of two of the SKA’s precursor telescopes, South Africa’s MeerKAT on the left and Australia’s ASKAP on the right, brought together under a shared sky.

**All other images:** photography by Brad Coleman, John Curtin Gallery.
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(Left)

**Emu in the Sky**
**Margaret Whitehurst**
© Margaret Whitehurst, Yamaji Art Centre 2014
Acrylic on linen
76.5cm x 55.7cm

“Caterpillars crossing the roads, they try to hide their eggs by not leaving too many tracks.”

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(Right)

**Lacerta**
**Margaret Whitehurst**
© Margaret Whitehurst, Yamaji Art Centre 2014
Acrylic on linen
77cm x 55.5cm

“This constellation made me think of a sound wave from space and the symbol of the constellation. I was intrigued by sound coming from space and it sounded like static. That is why I painted it.”

Acknowledgement: Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation (Yamaji Art Centre)

Notes

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A girl of the early times was hungry and cross in her confinement hut during her first menses. She was not allowed to gather food for herself, nor was she allowed to be seen by the young hunters, in case their arrows should grow cold and their hunting fail.

The pressure inside her intensified till she flung the wood ashes from her fire into the sky. “You who are wood ashes, you will altogether become the Milky Way, and sail through the sky, following your footprints, so people coming home by night can see their way.”

Jeni Couzyn
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014
(Left)

**Spare my Children**
© Bethesda Foundation, 2014

First People Artists
Bethesda Arts Centre
Collaborative art quilt
193cm x 104cm

Moon goes along, brightening the darkness. Moon sets. Sun is following close behind. Sun slices at Moon with his knife, each daybreak, a little more. Painfully Moon goes along, decaying away. He cries out to Sun, “O Sun! leave for my children the backbone!”

(Right)

**Our Roots**
© Bethesda Foundation, 2014

First People Artists
Bethesda Arts Centre
Collaborative art quilt
137cm x 143cm

At the Bethesda Arts Centre we work with /Xam stories told by the Shaman //Kabbo and others to linguists Bleek and Lloyd in the 19th Century. In the manuscripts, we recognise our own traditions. Using roots as a symbol for connectedness, we make art that explores and connects us to our own ancestral past.

**Jeni Couzyn**
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014
(Left)

**Venus**  
**Kevin Merritt**  
© Kevin Merritt, Yamaji Art Centre 2014  
Acrylic on linen  
53cm x 44.5cm  
“This is the story of the beautiful morning star, Venus. I was inspired by Ray Norris on a field trip to Boolardy Station, at the site. We were walking around at 4 o’clock on a dark morning to catch a glimpse of the ‘Morning Star Rope’ phenomenon, which at certain times of the year appeared. Ray Norris excitedly explained how it appeared. So this is the painting to depict what actually occurs.”

(Right)

**The Jewellery Box**  
**Barbara Merritt**  
© Barbara Merritt, Yamaji Art Centre 2014  
Acrylic on linen  
76cm x 53.5cm  
“The most spectacular Universe structure in the Milky Way known as one of the Pointers of the Southern Cross.”

Acknowledgement: Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation (Yamaji Art Centre)
In the early time, the sun was asleep in his house, shining for himself alone. The earth was cold and dark. The mothers couldn’t dry the ant-larvae to eat so they were hungry, and the people were cold.

Then the old woman gathered the children together: “My children, creep up to that old man the sun while he is sleeping. Creep up to that old Sun Armpit, and fling him into the sky, so that the earth can be warm for us, so that all the world will be bright.”

**Jeni Couzyn**
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014
### Coma Berenices

**Charmaine Green**  
© Charmaine Green, Yamaji Art Centre 2014  
Acrylic on linen  
58.5cm x 50.3cm

“After talking and spending time with the scientists I want to look at other constellations. The story behind Coma Berenices caught my attention because of the relationship to the importance of the hair to the night sky. In our culture hair is not to be cut at night.”

### Hydra

**Nerolie Blurton**  
© Nerolie Blurton, Yamaji Art Centre 2014  
Acrylic on linen  
64cm x 52cm

“This constellation is related to Hydra.”

Acknowledgement: Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation (Yamaji Art Centre 2014)
The girl who made stars gazed at the night sky. She thought about new life that would pass through her body, and the stars treading their path through the sky as they should.

She saw how the sky lay still, but the stars were the ones who moved, sailing along their path. Darkness comes out, darkness is upon the ground. The stars, at first white, wax red. They feel that turning, they follow the sun. The lhuin roots are stars. The people are stars. The Milky Way gently glows, lighting up the ground.

Jeni Couzyn
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014
“The image of the Emu in Sky when its emu egg time. Colours depict the different patterns and colours of the night & emu - is my contemporary way of painting.”

Acknowledgement: Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation (Yamaji Art Centre)
In the early time there was no death. Hare was crying: “My mother is dead. She will not come again!”

Moon was firm: “Hare, your mother has died, but she will, like me, like all of nature, return alive.”

“Oh no no no,” cried Hare. “My mother is altogether dead. She will not living return.” He cried and howled. There was no stopping him.

Moon became angry and cleft his mouth. He cursed the Hare: “From now on you, and all humanity, will die, and when you have died, you will not living return.”

Jeni Couzyn
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014
Ilgali Inyayimanha
‘Shared Sky’
Margaret Whitehurst, Jenny Green, Barbara Merritt, Charmaine Green, Kevin Merritt, Sherryl Green, Tracey Green, Wendy Jackamarra, Susan Merry, Johnaya Jones, Gemma Merritt, Craig ‘Chook’ Pickett and Nerolie Blurton.

© Margaret Whitehurst, Jenny Green, Barbara Merritt, Charmaine Green, Kevin Merritt, Sherryl Green, Tracey Green, Wendy Jackamarra, Susan Merry, Johnaya Jones, Gemma Merritt, Craig ‘Chook’ Pickett and Nerolie Blurton. Yamaji Art Centre 2014

Acrylic on linen
152.5cm x 122cm; 152.5cm x 122cm
(2 panels)

“It doesn’t matter where we live on this barna (earth). Nganha (we) are all sharing the same Ilgari (sky). Although we may see different Ilgarijiri (things belonging to the sky) we are looking up at the same stars and constellations. We are Ilgari Inyayimanha (sharing the sky). Bulgari Ingari Inyayimanha. Those two are sharing the sky – Australia and South Africa. Ngahu ilgari Inyayimanha. (We are all sharing the sky). Yamaji Art Centre.”

Acknowledgement: Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation (Yamaji Art Centre)
Mantis, called /Kaggen, is a celestial trickster figure in /Xam mythology. In the three Mantis stories depicted here, first he lies down, pretending to be a dead Red Hartebeest. When excited children cut him up for food, the dead head speaks to them. The children flee in terror.

Next, Baboons kill the Mantis’ son, Gaunu Tsaxau, and play ball with his eye.

In the third story, Mantis, having created darkness, throws his shoe up into the sky, where it becomes the moon walking its path in the sky.

Jeni Couzyn
© Jeni Couzyn, 2014