

Artist: **VIRGINIA KEFT**

Grace Cossington Smith art award FINALISTS Exhibition 2024



*matjam bagin tja
(flying fox in the
twilight), 2023,
synthetic polymer and
textiles on canvas, 93
x 123 cm*

About Virginia Keft

Dr. Virginia Keft is a Murriwarri Woman, artist, performer, and researcher. Her practice includes painting, drawing, weaving, sculpture and sound art. Her work celebrates connections to place, community, and language. Weaving features in her practice, physically and symbolically.

www.virginiakeft.com.au

From the Artist

I hold a deep respect and love of this place. The painting represents the Australian landscape on Dharawal Country as viewed from my window. The warm twilight glow that envelopes the work and embraces the bluegreen of Geera (Mt Keira) speaks to ideas of 'home' in multiple senses. As a child I learned sewing and textile skills by watching my mother at her sewing machine. As an adult I sat by the Barwon River with Elders and learned the ancient weaving practices of my people. In this work, home comes together – the ever-present flying foxes that inhabit the gums below Mt Keira and the suburban backyard are connected to my cultural ways of making and weaving.

Virginia Keft won the GCS art award, and Judges Felicity Fenner and Blair French commented:

matjam bagin tja (flying fox in the twilight) evokes the mood and atmosphere of the suburban fringe where human infrastructure and the natural world intersect. Keft has produced an intricate and complex painting that combines traditional weaving and intricate linework to communicate that fleeting moment of beauty as the colours of the setting sun illuminate the sky.

Studying

- Look at the Tjanpi Weavers website <https://tjanpi.com.au/>
In the About Us dropdown research the materials and techniques used in traditional indigenous weaving – as used by Keft in weaving the bats and other elements in her painting.
Look at works by the Tjanpi artists and sketch and make notes about weaving you find interesting

Making

- Create a painting that is inspired by where you live. Include what is important in your life. You can use colours to reflect your personality and symbols to suggest your feelings and moods.