WANDJINA

Wandjinjas are creative beings found in paintings under rock shelters and on rocks and rockfaces in the Northern Kimberley region of Western Australia. The style of representation seems to be very strict with usually no mouth shown and heads surrounded by a halo or helmet type of outline. The Wandjina moved through the land with their helpers creating formations of land, the people and their culture. They gave the guardianship of the land to the people and when they died each left their image on the rock where it was painted by himself or his helpers. The spirit of the Wandjina lives on.

The Aboriginal people inherited the paintings and must touch them up only at certain times so that babies can be born, the rains come and the seasons continue in the proper way. Wandjina are the spirit of the cloud, both human and cloud-like. They are responsible for the life-cycle of the people and the land. They give out the spirits of children and control the seasons and weather. If they are offended they can bring the lightning and storms, flood the land and drown people, or bring a cyclone to tear through the country.