

THE BEACH-COMBER attitude has long been a mainstay of art. From the bird's wings of Leonardo, to the Aladdin's cave of Warhol, artists seemingly have an inability to part with any object which might conceivably be construed as a testament to the act of being. It is this same primitive drive to preserve and reconstruct that lies behind the collages of Schwitters and the intricate box art of Joseph Cornell. In the hands of Picasso, the parts of an old bicycle become the head of a bull, while the close inspection of a Miró bronze might reveal the fossil-like impression of a discarded toy.

The elements of Eric Moody's art are the stuff of everyday life — a light bulb, electric flex, discarded cans and plastic bottles — detritus salvaged from the domestic waste of consumer society. To the intimate and familiar Moody adds anonymous fragments pillaged from demolition sites — brick and concrete shards, or truncated lengths of skirting and cornice, still bearing traces of household gloss in long discontinued hues. These *objets trouvés* are skillfully interwoven to build reflections of the society in which we live, mirroring the decay of the inner cities in their shanty-like construction and inevitably raising the issues of ecology and political ineptitude. As monuments to the late 20th Century they are pathetic reminders of the failed dreams of urban planners and of the spiritual bankruptcy of Metropolitan existence.

Beyond these obvious and literal associations, Moody's work is also a subtle meditation on the state of Modern Art. The generation of Picasso, Miró, Schwitters, et al., were themselves emigrées, drawn across international frontiers to the new cosmopolitan centres of Paris, New York, Berlin and London. Thrown together with political radicals in the poorer quarters of the Metropolis, their use of found materials, impoverished to the average eye, was a rejection of traditional bourgeois values. Ironically, much anti-establishment gestures rapidly became sanitised under the formalist guise of International Modernism, the de-politicised artefact becoming the institutionalised mainstay of the international museums. The once aggressively radical statements of Picasso, or of the Dadaists, or of Surrealism, are now nothing more than objects of formal contemplation and adjuncts to post-war capitalism.

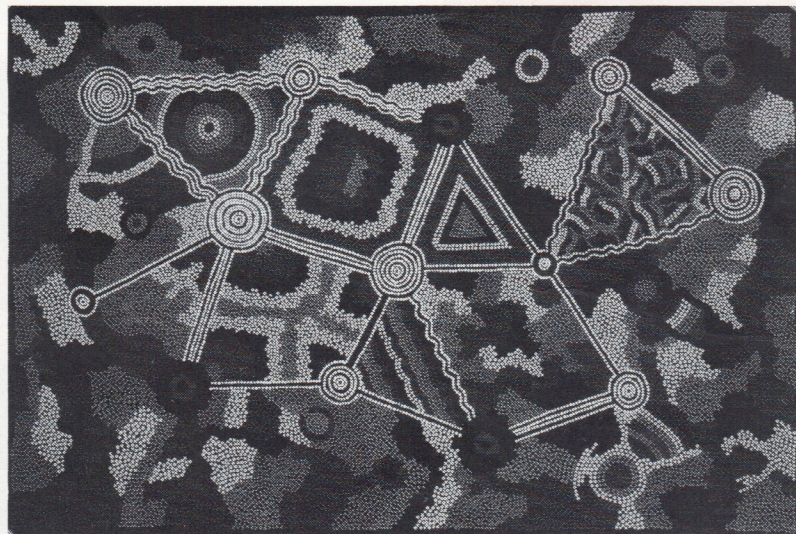
Moody's sculpture attempts to return the found objects to its rightful place as agent provocateur. Little concession has been made to the aesthetics of formalism and they remind us just how difficult it must have been for a contemporary public to assimilate the original works of Picasso or Duchamp. In a real sense, Moody's work attempts both to revitalise and to step outside of the tradition of 20th Century art. The starting point clearly takes us back to the early decades of the century, but in trying to circumnavigate the pit-falls of later years, Moody eludes the more usual values of critical appraisal. The sculpture is self-consciously awkward and unaesthetic (in the very way that Picasso's or Duchamp's must have at first appeared) and leaves the spectator with only the political content for consideration.

accepted on the same terms as objects in our everyday lives, to be judged by functions rather than aesthetics. As functioning comments on the quality and the reality of life in the Metropolis they carry the ring of truth. Like the contemporary models from which they are drawn — whether it be the intimate intrusion of the bull-dozer into the condemned building or the cardboard city under Waterloo Bridge — we are accustomed to pass by such experiences on the other side. Moody's work makes us linger that bit longer and might perhaps cause us the unease from which all political change must spring. **Keith Patrick**

The Royal Institute of British Architects is at 66 Portland Place, London W1. Regular exhibitions are held in the sculpture court.

Rebecca Hossack Gallery CLIFFORD POSSUM & PAPUNYA TULA ARTISTS

LIKE OTHER forms of sacred or totem art, the twenty-seven paintings in this exhibition, one of half a dozen aboriginal art



CLIFFORD POSSUM
Water Dreaming
Rebecca Hossack Gallery

shows in London alone since last Spring, demonstrated that the ancient traditions of the people are integral to their heritage.

Yet the richness of their imagery comes more from their very private visual litany: at the outset, **Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri** pioneers a lexicon of visual symbols that in this show represent a dozen common objects, from waterholes to women sitting with wooden bowls, from wind and rivers to the tracks of kangaroos, emus and budgerigars. This, apart from the verbal linguistics carrying a street-cred of their own, is supplemented by the works — like wall-hangings or tapestries or tiles — possessing a configuration which has no 'right way up', the onlooker is fascinated by an aerial view, depicting an acreage that has infinite points of reference.

The secretiveness of the symbolism has been enhanced by the technical education the 'painting men' received from their upbringing in the Dreamings (the sites), from founder member **Mick Namarari**, whose work was filmed by **Geoff Bardon** (who also provided the community with acrylic and paints) and then from the work of

school, founded in 1972, has fostered a remarkable cohesiveness in style — a continual flourishing, meticulous, draughtsmanship that rivals mainstream Australian art, and an adaptability to changing landscapes.

Clifford Possum, with fifteen of the exhibits, began as a carver of snakes and goannas and who is now elder statesman of the dot and circle movement, leads with emblematic works of vibrant inventiveness of shape. His circular *Wild Bush Berry Dreaming*, with black representing the roots, the green: berries, and the lines the sticks used by the diggers, has a warm fertility. His *Rainbow Snake Dreaming at Mt Dennison*, with myriad shapes, carries a suggestion of rapacity by a snake mixed with subsequent celebration; and his *Honey Ant Dreaming* is an immaculate composition of Dreaming paths. The more symmetrical works come from **Johnny Scobie Tjapanangka**, **Mick Namarari** and **William Sandy**. The salmon pinks of *Rainbow and Lightning Dreaming* make a pleasing contrast to the browns and greens. **Billy Stockman's Coniston Water Station** introduced modernity to age-old symbols,

and the works of the Pintupi tribe are startling.

With all works especially commissioned, priced at between £1,000 and £20,000 (the Australian agencies are establishing centres to ensure no artists suffer at the hands of unscrupulous dealers), every detail adds to the myth of an historic culture.

Nicholas Brooks

Current Exhibition: Shaun Brosnan sculpture (25/9 - 27/10/90)

Bohun Gallery SCOTTISH ARTISTS PART II

HENLEY-ON-Thames, noted for its annual regatta, is not perhaps the place to expect an exhibition such as this, but the *Bohun Gallery* has proved once again that enterprise and originality are not the sole preserve of the Metropolis. **Clare Henry**, art critic of *The Glasgow Herald* has for the second year selected ten Scottish Artists virtually unknown south of Hadrian's