

GALLERIES

Martin taught a course of Conceptual and Minimal art based on the account of the most influential dealers of the international avant garde, and that has paid off for them and for their students.

I will be looking out for the figurative painters graduating from the Life Room teaching of Euan Uglow and Norman Norris

at the Slade, and from Norman Blamey's and John Lessore's visits to the Royal Academy Schools. It is a question of personal preference, but the principle behind all these courses is the same.

Good young artists come from the consistent teaching and interest of committed artists. Who taught who, is an artist's

pedigree, and it is a sound basis for the starting of a collection. It could also have the encouraging effect of keeping the administrators, educationalists, theorists and marketeers in a subservient position to the practising artists in our art schools.

songlines and dreamings

Isabel Wolff

The Aboriginal people of Australia have been painting for over fifty thousand years, so there's something of an irony in the fact that their work is only just beginning to catch on. But the 'dot and circle' paintings of the central and western desert are creating something of a stir on the contemporary art market – and not a little confusion too. Painted in bright acrylics on large canvases, they look very abstract, with an emphasis on dots, squiggles, circles and wavy lines. But their pointillistically modern appearance belies an ancient cultural and anthropological pedigree which reaches back to the Dreamtime of Aboriginal mythology.

They're really religious maps – transpositions onto canvas of the sacred designs created on the ground at Aboriginal ceremonies and initiation rites. They tell, in coded form, the 'dreaming' stories of the Aboriginal creation theory when ancient beings roamed the world singing into existence the landscape and everything on it. Over the last three years these desert paintings have started to sell in a very big way (especially in America) and the fact that art critics don't yet seem to know how to evaluate them – whether in visual or

anthropological terms – has only enhanced the growing fascination with them.

Amidst fears about over-production and the flooding of the market with somewhat mediocre work, a few outstanding names are holding their place at the top – Clifford Possum Japaltjarri, Michael Nelson Jakamarra and Billy Stockman. The work of all these painters can be seen at the **Mall Galleries** (6th–11th June). There will be over eighty paintings on show there, some of them six metres long (with price tags to match) but the majority are smaller works by rising stars. Names to watch out for there will

be Frank Jakamarra, Wingie Napaltjarri, Desma Kantamara and Epinga Nangala.

Patrick Corbally Stourton's exhibition entitled *Songlines and Dreamings*, is a one-off: but Aboriginal paintings can be seen all year round at the **Rebecca Hossack Gallery** in (London's) Windmill Street. Rebecca is herself Australian and she's London's only dealer in Aboriginal art. Her exhibition, from June 22nd, is called *Songlines 1V*, and is devoted entirely to the work of Clifford Possum – the Michaelangelo, as it were, of the desert painting movement.



Clifford Possum Japaltjarri holding his painting 'Emu Dreaming' photo Patrick Corbally Stourton