

Time Out

## Small Masterworks from Papunya Tula

REBECCA HOSSACK

This is the fifth annual aboriginal art season mounted by Rebecca Hossack. She says she is saddened by all the westerners who come to the gallery expecting everything to be painted in earth coloured dots, purists looking for 'authentic primitive work'. They have failed to understand that these aboriginal artists working in acrylic on canvas have adopted and transformed their ancient myths and signs to create a contemporary visual language. Informed by their ancient Dreamings and traditional iconography, they have developed richly differing styles. To lump them all together under the generic title 'Aboriginal Artists' is to imply that because Monet

and Pissaro were both Impressionists their work was indistinguishable one from the other.

On show here are a large collection of painted canvases and Coolamons, long dish-shaped pieces of painted wood used by women to do everything from gathering food to carrying the baby. The styles vary enormously, from the traditional single-tone dots on a flat ground to the luminous experimental pieces by artists such as Pansy Nakpangardi, which are full of complex shifts of colour. In the work of Maxie Tjampitjimpa we can see the collision of two cultures. Dots have been sponged onto a dark ground to become blurred and broken. The effect is intense, expressionistic. It is time to stop looking at this work as an ethnographical curiosity, the daubings of 'noble savages', and give it its due respect as contemporary art. *Sue Hubbard*

