

Time Out

Songlines

Rebecca Hossack Gallery

Working in that most modern of mediums, acrylic, Aboriginal artists have found a way of translating their ancient tradition of sand-painting on to canvas without losing the sense of magic which pervades their art. A large touring exhibition of these pictures in America has made Aboriginal art the flavour of the month among collectors in the States. The hype has not been so strong over here and Rebecca Hossack is the only European gallery regularly exhibiting Aboriginal paintings, with prices well below those in America. Whether the Aborigines will hold their place for long in the carnivorous art market remains to be seen, but their fascinating work should be viewed with respect and humility. Having passed through Modernism we can, at last, begin to appreciate the subtlety of the abstract forms which the Aboriginal artists create, playing with patterns and rhythms of colours in a way which appears simple until you begin to explore further. These pictures by artists from the Great Western Desert are as abstract as a stripe-painting by Bridget Riley and as capable of making the eyeballs buzz with their hypnotic whirls of pigment dots. But they are story-paintings too, rooted in the artist's tribal history. The symbolism is so vivid that cultural barriers dissolve and one is reminded of the octopi on Attic vases or the stars vibrating in Van Gogh's painting of a 'Starry Night'.

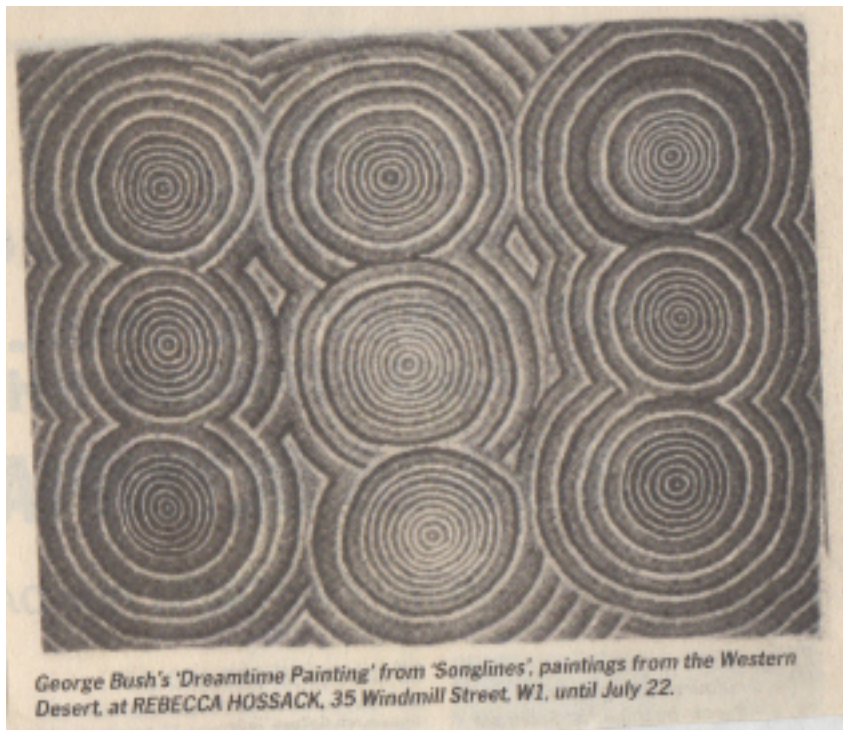
Robert Macdonald



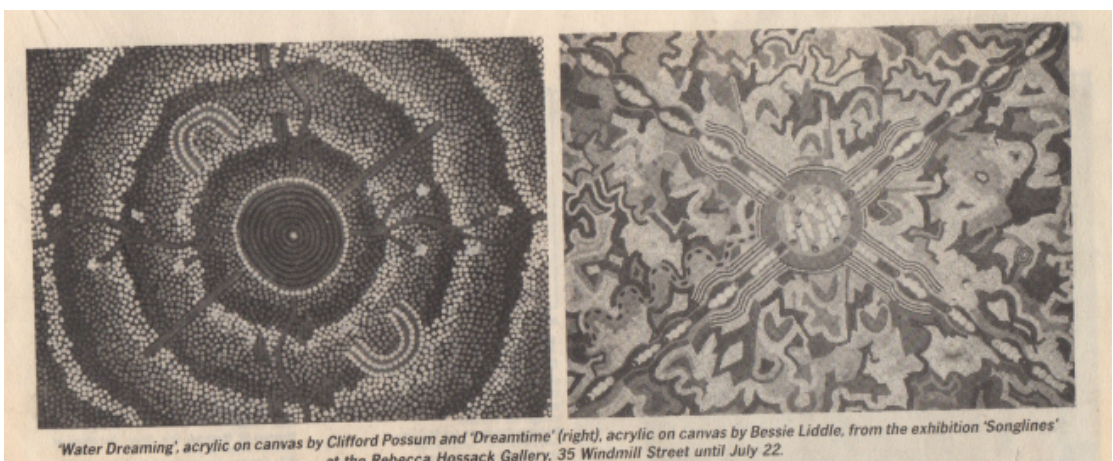
What's On

I N L O N D O N

12 July-19 July 1989 60p



George Bush's 'Dreamtime Painting' from 'Songlines', paintings from the Western Desert, at REBECCA HOSSACK, 35 Windmill Street, W1, until July 22.



'Water Dreaming', acrylic on canvas by Clifford Possum and 'Dreamtime' (right), acrylic on canvas by Bessie Liddle, from the exhibition 'Songlines' at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery, 35 Windmill Street until July 22.