

PADDY BEDFORD

*I always paint my mother's country and my father's country. I don't paint other people's country. The emu is one of my dreamings.*¹

A major exhibition of Paddy Bedford's paintings will be on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, from 6 December 2006 until 18 February 2007. The exhibition represents the first time that work of this significant Indigenous Australian artist will be the subject of a major survey at a public museum.

The relationship of Aboriginal people to the land is integral to the understanding of the work of Paddy Bedford. His paintings combine important

ancestral *Dreamings* (which can be defined as the relationship between physical and the spiritual world) such as emu, turkey and cockatoo with contemporary life that incorporate the rivers and traditionally owned land he inhabits along with the roads, stock camp life, stock yards and country visited while mustering horses.

As a senior law man Bedford has been involved in painting as part of ceremony all his life. He began to translate these stories and motifs onto canvas in 1997 when Freddy Timms set up the Jirrawun Aboriginal Art group at Rugun (Crocodile Hole) in the East Kimberley region, which is a remote area in the far north of Western Australia. His work is recognised as part of the 'Turkey Creek' style made famous by Rover Thomas and Queenie McKenzie with its expanses of plain ochre with abstracted, discreet motifs and sparse lines marked by white dots. These images depict the bones of the landscape in which he has spent a life time.

Paddy's international profile and reputation have been increasing in recent years, and he is one of a small number of Indigenous Australian artists selected to create a site-specific work for the new Quai Branly Museum of Indigenous Cultures to open in Paris in 2006. Quai Branly is an initiative of French President Jacques Chirac, with the objective of creating a dedicated international museum to showcase the artistic work of indigenous cultures from around the world.

Paddy, or Kuwumji (pronounced "Koomsie"), is a Gija law man of Jawalyi skin who was born at Bedford Downs Station in the East Kimberley around 1922. He worked as a stockman on Bedford for many years and then retired to Warmun Community, Turkey Creek. Recent exhibitions include *Blood on the Spinifex*, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne, *Rhapsodies in Country*, Grant Pirrie at Art Miami, USA, *Land Mark, Mirror Mark*, Drill Hall Gallery Australian National University and Columbia State University, NY, USA, 2000, *Kluge - Ruhe Collection of Aboriginal Art*, University of Virginia, USA, and *Mapping Our Countries*, Djamu Gallery, Australian Museum, Sydney.

¹ Paddy Bedford, quoted in Tony Oliver, Marcia Langton & Frances Kofod (eds), *Blood on the Spinifex* exhibition catalogue, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2002.

Contents:

Approx. 40-50 canvas paintings and gouaches

Approximate running metres:

215 running metres
(MCA Level 1 and Mezzanine galleries)

Exhibition materials:

The exhibition will be supplemented by a major publication on the artist that will serve as his catalogue raisonné.

An online education resource kit for students and teachers

A range of public programs

All didactic information provided in English

Insurance:

Covered by individual venues

Fee:

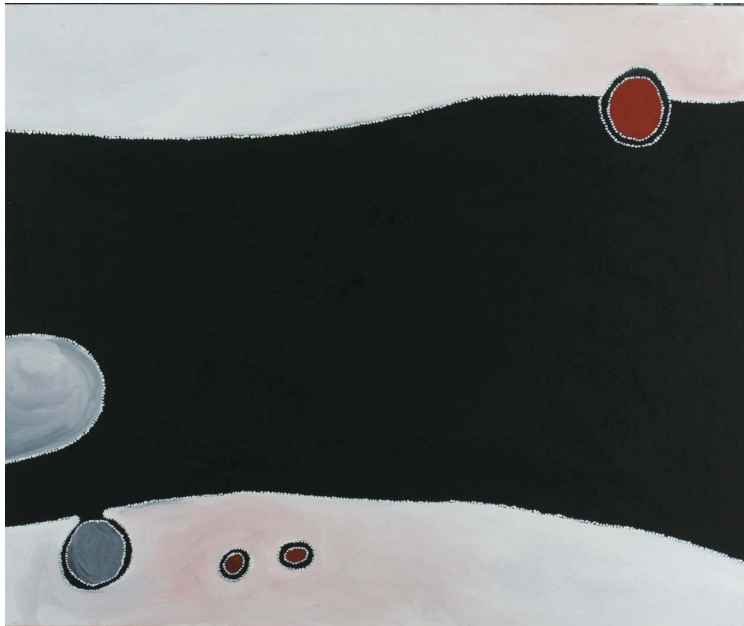
US\$25,000 (international) + transport

Contact:

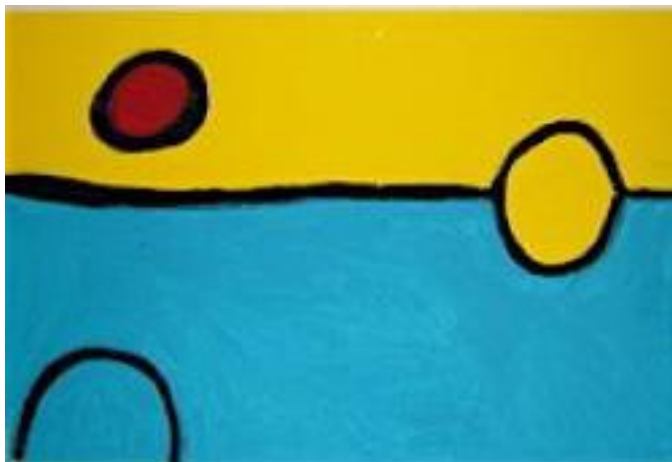
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Paddy Bedford
Blanket Lizard Dreaming 2005
150 x 180cm
Natural pigments with acrylic binder on Belgian linen
Laverty Collection, Sydney



Paddy Bedford
Untitled 2005
50 x 70cm
Gouache on paper
Private Collection